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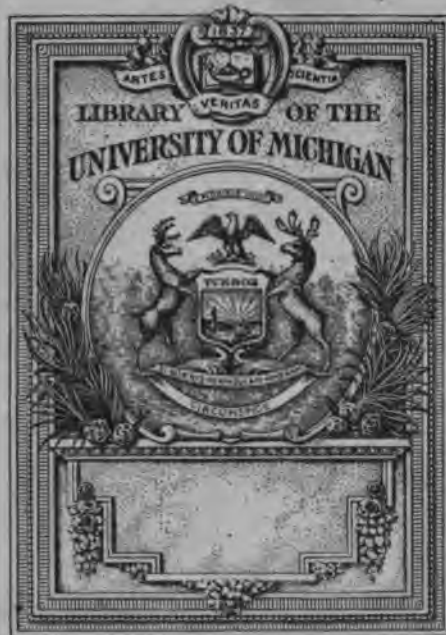
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ANCIENT GREEK COINS

XI-XVI SICILY

BY

FRANK SHERMAN BENSON



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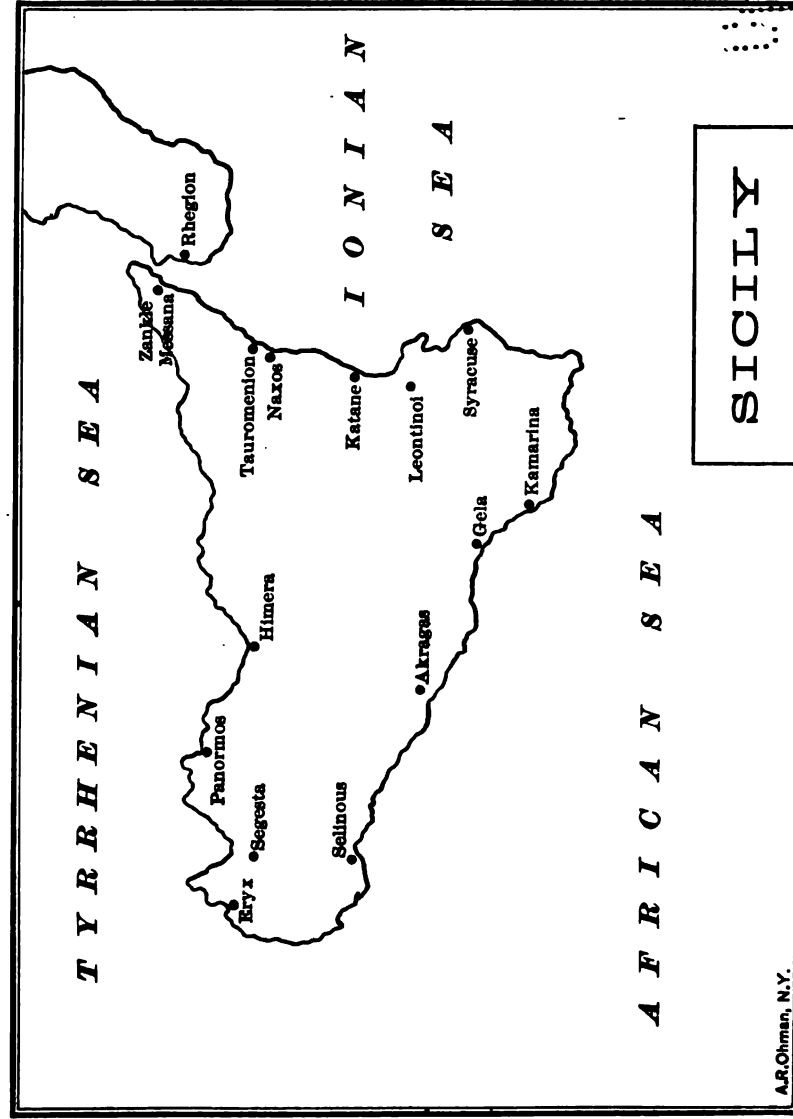






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# ANCIENT GREEK COINS

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## VOLUME III PARTS XI-XIV, SICILY

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BY

FRANK SHERMAN BENSON



PRIVATELY PRINTED

1903-4





FROM these form-endowed pieces of  
metal the glory of the old Sicilian  
cities, now obscured, still shines forth  
fresh and radiant before us.

— *Goethe.*

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# ANCIENT GREEK COINS

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XI  
SICILY, I

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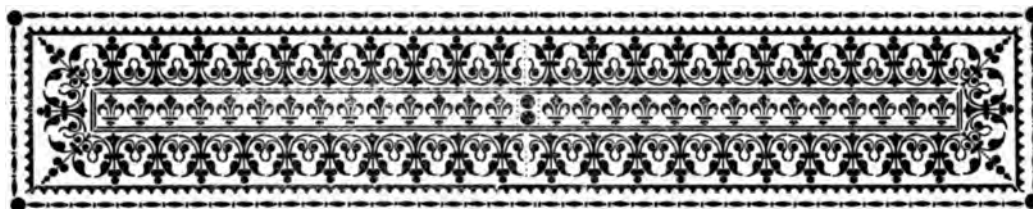
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## ANCIENT GREEK COINS.

### XI. SICILY, I.

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WE have seen that, taken as a whole, the coin issues which illustrate the various political phases of that brilliant, changeable, many-fortuned Syracuse, excel those of every other city, state or dynasty throughout the Greek world, in presenting a rare combination of beauty, variety, and historical sequence. Yet this marked superiority need not diminish our anticipations of interest and enjoyment as we approach the further consideration of Sicilian civic coinages, for there will appear so many examples, surpassed only by the masterpieces which form the subject of the last six articles, that several papers may profitably be devoted to studying the issues of Akragas, Gela, Katane, Messana, Selinous and kindred cities of Sicily, during the flourishing years of their varied independent existence. In its widest range this embraced, as in the case of Syracuse, the fifth, fourth and third centuries prior to the Christian era.

Before entering however upon this pleasing pursuit, in order that we may possess a more perfect acquaintance with such striking historical events as

have evidently occasioned or influenced the various coin issues, it seems necessary that a brief sketch of Sicilian affairs during this period should here be presented.

The year 480 B. C., celebrated for that great victory at Himera where the combined Sikeliot cities, under the leadership of Gelon (No. 67), defeated the Carthaginian invaders, formed a turning point in Sicilian history; since this overwhelming success in their first collision with a foreign foe inspired the Sikeliots with a new self-confidence, established the wisdom of their civil and military institutions, showed them the value of skilled combination against a powerful but unorganized enemy, and enriched states as well as individuals by an enormous increase in the number of slave-laborers, to which class the 200,000 prisoners were promptly reduced. As has been already noted, those wonderful architectural works, both religious and secular, whose massive remains still impress the traveller in Sicily, were begun at this period.

Seventy years of peace or of petty intercivic strife succeeding — the momentous Athenian expedition (No. 90 ff) influenced Syracuse almost alone — nothing of general importance can be mentioned until 409 B. C. In this year it was that Carthaginian vengeance, restrained yet fostered since the old defeat, at last seized its favorable opportunity; and a resistless host under Hannibal now invading Sikeliot lands appeased the brooding shades of Hamilkar and his slaughtered warriors by fiercely annihilating the cities of Selinous and Himera. But if Punic revenge was thus sated, Punic greed for conquest had but awakened; so that in 406 and the following year a second invasion, equally overwhelming, proceeded to destroy with fire and sword Akragas, Gela and Kamarina; while neighboring Syracuse was saved only by the genius of Dionysios whose military and diplomatic talents here first had a chance to display their transcendent power.

While the Greek cities on the north and south coasts thus suffered a total or temporary eclipse at the hands of the Carthaginians, those towns on the east side of the island, with the exception of Leontinoi,—made tributary by Syracuse in 423 B. C.—continued their independent but now precarious

existence for slightly longer periods, Naxos being ruined and Katane depopulated by Dionysios in 403; while Messana, after similar crushing treatment from the third Punic invading army in 396, did indeed somewhat later receive a new body of settlers, yet without ever regaining her former position.

The presence of the deliverers (No. 100) on Sicilian soil (B. C. 357-336) gave a fresh impulse to democratic freedom in such of these cities as feebly survived, but within a few years Agathokles (Nos. 102-108) again subjected all to a tyrant's rule; and soon after his death the commencement of the first Punic War (B. C. 264) introduced into Sicily a third master power, one destined to vanquish in turn Greek and barbarian, and to crush all independent life by making every city an humble and unchangeable element in the great Roman commonwealth.

#### AKRAGAS.

AKRAGAS, second in power and dominion to Syracuse alone, and yielding to none of Sicilian cities in wealth and luxury, presents, in even more sudden transition than her great Doric rival, the two-fold spectacle of stately magnificence and deep humiliation.

Founded by neighboring Gela in 580 B. C., and thus the latest Greek settlement of note, "lofty" Akragas attained prosperity and greatness with unexampled rapidity, since her productive territory and commanding position in the centre of the south Sicilian coast enabled her to monopolize for a century and a half the valuable African trade in wine and olive oil, her leading products. Resultant luxury did not however produce effeminacy and weakness as in the case of Sybaris, for her citizens stood ever foremost among the defenders of Sikeliot freedom, while on her roll of illustrious names we find many whom forceful character and intellectual brilliancy place in the front rank of men of action and thought.

First in time among these come the tyrants, Phalaris, savage, treacherous and implacable, "Phalaris, the burner in the brazen bull, him of pitiless heart,"



remembered by posterity chiefly for this new refinement of cruelty, in whose hollow body over a slow fire, enemies and sometimes friends, so-called, miserably perished; and in the next century Theron, nobly born, despot indeed and thus selfishly ambitious, but otherwise a just, upright, and energetic ruler, proud of the city he had so grandly beautified, and always battling for her aggrandizement. By the extension of his dominion across the island to Himera, Theron became the indirect cause of that first Carthaginian invasion, so imposing, yet so miserably unsuccessful; while he took a no less prominent part in the destruction of this Punic host, showing himself, as commander of the Akragantine forces, a valuable ally of the Syracusans, whose general-in-chief, Gelon, had married his daughter Damareta (No. 67). Next appear two natures far different from these; first Empedokles, by turns a philosophic reformer establishing democratic codes and ethical systems, a divinely inspired poet composing tragedies, epics and propitiatory hymns, a skillful physician miraculously healing the sick, and even, his followers claimed, raising the dead, and an astute, self-sacrificing leader of the people, so devoted to his country's welfare as to refuse the proffered tyranny and even to obey without protest an unmerited decree of banishment. Legend recounts that from this exile he did indeed return, but only to disappear finally and inexplicably from the haunts of men, thus affording in ancient minds a fitting climax to his mystery-shrouded life. And lastly wealthy Gellias, the accepted type of splendid, lordly hospitality, whose tranquil days of unselfish beneficence and devotion to the happiness of his fellow men came to a terrible end. For as he saw from the Acropolis those victorious Carthaginian hordes swarm into his beloved city, despairingly he set fire to the temple of Athene, in which with a devoted band he had vainly hoped to find an inviolate refuge.

Thus, in the year 406 B. C., amid fire, sack and slaughter perished the magnificence of Akragas, and so complete and irremediable was this destruction that her silver coinage, which as Dr. Head says, "at that period reflects the splendour to which Agrigentum had now attained," was never resumed.

## AKRAGAS.

125. Tetradrachm, wt. 268 grs. B. C. 472-415. (Pl. XI: 1.) Obv. ΑΚΡΑΓ-  
ΞΟΤΝΑ Eagle standing to left on line of dots. Rev. Crab.

126. Tetradrachm, wt. 267.5 grs. B. C. 472-415. (Pl. XI: 2.) Rev. Crab;  
beneath, floral scroll.

On the southern border of the cliff-edged plateau once covered by ancient Akragas there now lie prostrate some imposing ruins, those of a temple which, with the sole exception of that celebrated shrine dedicated to Ephesian Artemis, was the mightiest in the Greek world. Such a massive and enduring monument is sufficient proof of the reverence displayed by Akragantines toward Zeus Olympios; and we need feel no surprise at finding that an eagle, the bird peculiarly sacred to his worship, always occupies the place of honor on silver coins of Akragas from the earliest to the final issues. It should be observed that this eagle's figure here has the stocky, heavy appearance so noticeable in all representations of birds and animals during the early transitional period.

The crab, which for a reverse type is nearly as continuous, seems to be the fresh water variety so common in Sicily, and doubtless symbolizes the "yellow river," which washing two sides of the newly settled site very properly gave it a name.

## AKRAGAS.

127. Tetradrachm, wt. 267.5 grs. B. C. 415-406. (Pl. XI: 3.) Obv. Two eagles standing to right on a hare supine on a lofty rock, one with closed wings raising its head and screaming, the other with open wings about to tear the prey; to left, magistrate's name ΞΙΛΑΝΟΞ Rev. NONITNA (ΓΑΡΚΑ) on tablet above hanging by a nail. Quadriga to left, horses galloping and driven by winged Nike; in exergue, knotted club.

(From the Bunbury sale.)

Aeschylus in his *Agamemnon* thus strikingly describes a favorable portent which appeared to the sons of Atreus about to set sail for the conquest

of Ilion. Of several translations Browning's seems most deeply imbued with the very spirit of the old Greek's lofty and rugged diction : —

The bird-kings to these kings of ships, on high  
— The black sort and the sort that's white behind, —  
Appearing by the palace, on the spear-throw side,  
In right sky regions, visible far and wide —  
Devouring a hare-creature great with young,  
Baulked of more racings they, as she from whom they sprung.

Since the great tragedian during the course of several visits to Sicily had dwelt much at neighboring Gela, the mother-city of Akragas, his works were doubtless familiar through all the southern part of the island, and perhaps the remembrance of this passage may have inspired the engraver of our coin to encourage the Akragantines by depicting on their most notable issues a like propitious omen. For during many years before that terrible Punic devastation the consciousness of its certain approach must have been so persistent as to cast a baleful shadow over even careless, pleasure-loving Sikeliot life, and such prophetic though erring optimism should have brought grateful relief to harassed minds.

In describing the merit and peculiar charm of this design one cannot do better than to echo Dr. Head's sympathetic criticism : " As a powerful composition the type of the two eagles with the hare is perhaps superior to any other contemporary Sicilian coin-type, and is certainly the work of an artist of no mean capacity."

Akragas, never a sea power but in war celebrated chiefly for her cavalry, seems to have devoted herself, always with success, to the breeding of swift and enduring horses. For in the early years of the fifth century Pindar had " raised aloft the hymn of Olympic victory in honor of Theron ; the song in honor of unwearied steeds and the victorious four-horse car, in the twelve-times encircled boundary of the goal ; " and had sung too " the Isthmian victory not unknown to fame won by the chariot steeds " of Xenokrates, Theron's brother. While now as the century drew towards its fateful close another

Olympic victor twice-crowned raised his pageant-loving fellow citizens to such height of enthusiasm that they tore in their massive walls a wide breach through which the victorious Exainetos, escorted by three hundred white-horsed chariots, could make his triumphal entry.

It was probably in celebration of this soul-stirring event that the die-engraver was led to appropriate for his reverse theme the well-known Syracusan quadriga whose dash and vigor he has so well imitated. Less happy however is his device for showing the civic name, a tablet seeming here in hardly less questionable taste than when introduced, as already seen (No. 88), for displaying the signature of the artist.

Among the many legends to account for the origin of the greatest of Greek national festivals, Pindar speaks of "the Olympic games Herakles founded, from the spoils won in war." Thus it is probable that this hero's club in the exergue has some undiscovered connection with ritual observance at Olympia, and is also to be associated with the victories of Exainetos.

## AKRAGAS.

128. Tetradrachm, wt. 263 grs. B. C. 415-406. (Pl. XI: 4.) Obv. AKPAΓ Similar to 127. Rev. AKPAΓANTINON Crab; beneath, Skylla swimming to left.

(From the Bunbury sale.)

The treatment of the eagles has now become more natural than in the former evidently conventional figures, whose gem-like detail and fineness of touch are correspondingly wanting.

Our reverse gives a not unpleasing picture of the hideous creature of Homer's invention, a design instinct with life and yet softening all details of horror. This is besides the largest and most complete image of the "yelping monster of the rock" to be found in numismatic art, and although there seems to us little reason for such prominence here of a peculiarly Magna-Graecian legend, the unhappy sea-nymph is in all probability merely symbolic of some temporary or perchance vainly boasted naval supremacy. It is of interest to



compare this with the same figure on the helmeted heads of Thourioi Nos. 29 and 31, as well as in the exergue of the Syracusan reverse, No. 90.

#### AKRAGAS.

129. Tetradrachm, wt. 270.5 grs. B. C. 415-406. (Pl. XI: 5.) Obv. AKPA-ΓANTINON Eagle with open wings standing to left on a hare supine on a rock, on which, cockle-shell; eagle about to tear the prey. Rev. Crab; on either side, cockle-shell and purple-shell; beneath, sea-perch swimming to left.

(From the Montagu sale.)

The scene has here changed to the neighboring coast, as is shown by a sea shell lying upon the rock and by the symbols on either side of the crab, a salt water perch and again sea shells. Naturalism has still further advanced in the modeling of the eagle and accessories.

#### ERYX.

ERYX, one of those many most ancient cities in the Mediterranean traditionally founded by the Trojan leaders, wanderers after the sack of their burning Ilion, was indeed among the proudest in claiming for her *oikistes* no less a hero than Aeneas while on his voyage from Carthage to Italy. Placed in the extreme west of the island and, like Segesta her sister Elymian city, of Punic sympathies save when some conqueror from the east coast rolled the tide of invasion to and through her always stubbornly defended gates, she exercised so slight a political ascendancy that her history need not occupy us.

One possession however gave Eryx a world-famous and enduring pre-eminence; for on the very summit of her lofty mountain site rose crown-like one of the most wealthy, frequented and influential of ancient shrines. This stately and magnificent temple was indeed the peculiar sanctuary of that powerful goddess who, worshipped in earliest days as Punic or Canaanitish Ash-toreth, for the long centuries of Greek religious influence as Aphrodite



Erukinê, and later, in Roman times as Venus Erycina, thus always down the ages heard her various ritual, now cruel, now mystic, now sensuous, solemnly chanted throughout the civilized world.

ERYX.

130. Tetradrachm, wt. 266 grs. B. C. 415-400. (Pl. XI: 6.) Obv. Aphrodite seated to left, holding dove on extended right hand; in front, Eros stretching forth his arms in supplication. Rev. Quadriga to right, horses galloping on double exergual line, charioteer crowned by flying Nike.

(From the Frankfort sale, Oct., 1902.)

It must be borne in mind that the pious pilgrims who from far and wide were continually arriving at the sacred mount for worship, probably all came provided with money of their own special issues, or of some generally accepted coinage such as the Syracusan or Corinthian. In this medium they would make the expected generous votive offerings, would purchase victims for the frequent and elaborate ceremonial sacrifices, and would defray the expense of their sojourn in the town. There was then little need of an independent coinage, and as Eryx was never Hellenized, but retained an hereditary race distinction until Roman times, Greek engravers, probably of no great merit, must have been sought elsewhere to produce her scanty civic issues.

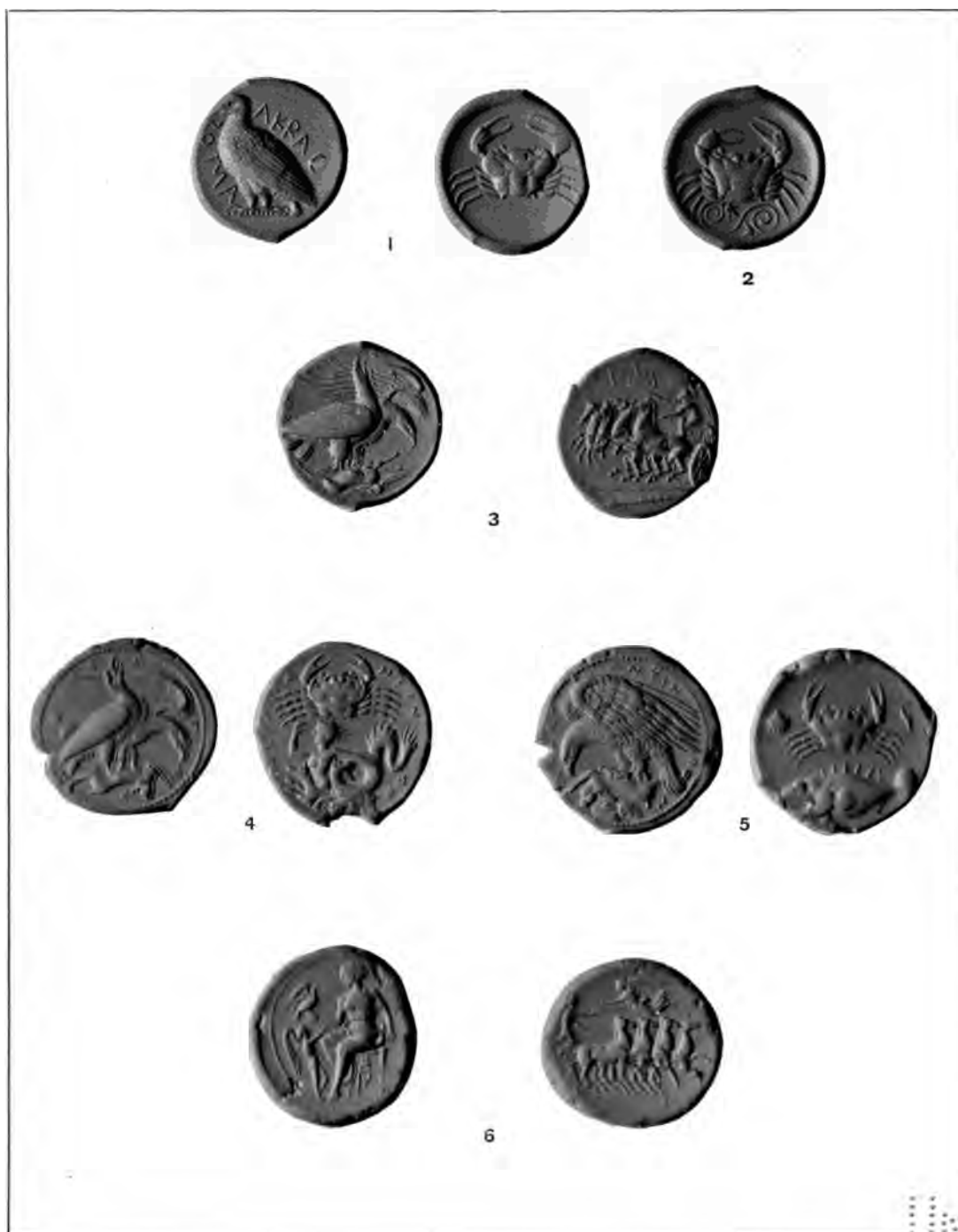
But in spite of an inferior treatment of this charming if somewhat too pictorial design, the devout and patriotic aim of the artist is evident, being no less than an apotheosis of the tutelary goddess of Eryx. Love, whether divine or human, pure or debased, self-forgetful or self-indulgent, has always exerted a powerful influence on the thoughts and actions of mankind. This realization dominates each element of the present composition; the radiant goddess of beauty and love proudly enthroned in token of her all-embracing dominion,—an idea which the reverse still further emphasizes by the floating Nike extending a victor's wreath,—Eros her youthful son in suppliant posture, emblematic of the crowd of worshippers who daily thronged these spacious temple courts, and a dove, her usual symbol, resting tranquilly on

the hand to typify her gentle and peaceful sway. By a convention frequent in bas-relief Eros as a subordinate figure is represented of smaller proportions in comparison with his divine mother.

We find no record, regarding Eryx, of any agonistic success in the great Hellenic games, so that the reverse type apart from its symbolism is only a copy, and a sadly poor one, of the quadriga scheme so popularized by the beauty and copiousness of the Syracusan series.

Attention was called in our Introduction to the frequent carelessness of Greek moneyers in the process of striking. The coins of my cabinet being as a rule carefully selected, this obverse really presents the first clear example of indifferent centreing, the die having evidently been placed so far on the right of the flan as to allow no trace of the inscription EPYKINON which some specimens show. In spite, however, of its various shortcomings of workmanship and preservation, the extreme rarity of this interesting coin makes it a highly prized possession.





ANCIENT GREEK SILVER COINS FROM THE BENSON COLLECTION.



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# ANCIENT GREEK COINS

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XII  
SICILY, 2

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## ANCIENT GREEK COINS.

### XII. SICILY, 2.

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ELA owed her origin to the enterprise of a combined expedition, which sailing from the islands of Crete and Rhodes, established in 688 B. C., the earliest Greek settlement on the south coast of Sicily. First called Lindioi, the city soon changed this name for one naturally arising from her situation on the banks of the river Gelas, and known thenceforth as Gela, continued to increase rapidly in power and territory. Indeed she might perhaps have become the first of Sikeliot towns had it not been for a strange fatality which seemed ever to transform her very excess of well-being into a cause of misfortune and decline. Thus abounding prosperity prompted and justified her foundation of Akragas at the beginning of the sixth century ; while toward its end Gela's brilliant ruler Hippokrates, first of Sikeliot tyrants to aim at extending his dominion beyond the usual narrow boundaries of a Greek city, pursued this policy of aggression with such success as to acquire by force, or control by diplomacy, the greater part of eastern Sicily ; Syracuse being almost alone in her continued independence.

Meanwhile Akragas, the daughter, had speedily surpassed the mother-city, and another severe blow was struck at Gela's prominence after the death of Hippokrates in 491. His successor Gelon (No. 60) who had treacherously seized the tyranny while guardian of his dead commander's sons, at once proceeded to strengthen and increase his own power, and incidentally that of his city. But although it was in the name of Gela that he restored, when entreated, the exiled Syracusan landowners to their homes; no sooner had he made himself master of Syracuse than amid general surprise and consternation he transferred thither the seat of government as well as one-half of his former fellow citizens.

The successive reigns of Gelon and his brother Hieron (Nos. 61-77) made Syracuse so powerful and magnificent that neglected Gela sank gradually into the position of a mere dependency, from which state not even the returning adherents of Thrasyboulos, when this last of the Geloan dynasty was driven from Syracuse by a popular outbreak, could succeed in raising her. With however enough reserve power to colonize afresh her ruined neighbor Kamarina, Gela continued during the fifth century to enjoy a certain amount of tranquil prosperity, as shown by some copious coin issues. But the crushing destruction at Carthaginian hands in 405 B. C., abruptly terminated all civic life until the general revival under Timoleon, although even then the local coinage was never systematically resumed.

Such briefly is the story of Gela, but what gives the city its touch of highest interest for us of to-day is that here befell the death of Aeschylus. Driven from Athens by professional envies and political dissensions, this great tragedian had been warmly welcomed at the court of Syracusan Hieron, where indeed several of the later masterpieces were first produced. Another sojourn at Athens ended in a second flight, this time under the charge of impiety, and Aeschylus again appeared in Sicily, hoping doubtless for a renewal of tranquil days at his beloved Gela. The well-known story goes that as he was walking on the seashore, an eagle, mistaking the poet's bald head for a smooth rock, dropped thereon a captured tortoise whose shell he wished to crush. Thus in the minds of the superstitious ancients was fulfilled a

well-known prophecy that to Aeschylus death should come by a blow from heaven.

GELA.

131. Tetradrachm, wt. 263 grs. Before 466 B. C. (Pl. XII: 1.) Obv.  $\Sigma\Lambda\Lambda\Gamma$  Forepart of man-headed bull, swimming to right. Rev. Quadriga to right, horses walking and crowned by flying Nike.

132. Didrachm, wt. 135 grs. Before 466 B. C. (Pl. XII: 2.) Obv.  $\Gamma\epsilon\lambda\alpha\epsilon$  Similar to last. Rev. Horseman, wearing only conical helmet, darting spear to right: border of dots.

This obverse type, so unvaryingly displayed by Gela during her less than a century of coinage, was, we may be sure, symbolic of the rushing river whose name had supplanted that earlier title derived from the mother-island. For a deep veneration towards the less powerful deities characterized Sicilian Greeks even more than Hellenes, and the river god Gelas was doubtless here worshiped with shrine and frequent sacrifice as a peculiarly benign and sympathetic divinity. Professor Percy Gardner would call our attention to the rough uncouthness of this half-animal, "its coarse features, short stubble-like hair, and the horn and ear of a beast," as compared with the refinement and dignity of the same mythical figure on the earlier coin of Laos, No. 8; where indeed these purer characteristics were so marked as to justify our attribution to the god Dionysos.

The great victories of Hippokrates came too early for immortality on coins, but Gelon's first successes, which were shortly to work such injury to his native city, may perhaps here be commemorated by the victory-crowned quadriga and the horseman in swift career. It is more likely, however, that these types point simply to agonistic triumphs; not indeed in any of the great Hellenic religious festivals, where a Gelan victory is unrecorded, but rather in some of those local games which were so general among the cities of the Greek world.

133. Tetradrachm, wt. 257 grs. B. C. 466-415. (Pl. XII: 3.) Obv.  $\Sigma\Lambda\Lambda\Gamma$  Forepart of man-headed bull swimming to right; above, grain of barley. Rev. Quadriga to right, horses walking; above, olive-wreath; in exergue, crane.

134. Tetradrachm, wt. 264 grs. B. C. 415-405. (Pl. XII: 4.) Obv.  $\Sigma\Lambda\Lambda\epsilon\Gamma$  Similar to last. Rev.  $\Gamma\epsilon\Lambda\Omega\iota\Omega\Nu$  Quadriga to left, horses galloping; above, eagle flying to left; in exergue, ear of barley.

(From the Bunbury sale.)

Sicilian coins at the end of the fifth century epitomize in miniature the power, luxury and refinement of their respective cities, and Gelan issues form no exception to this rule. These two examples, the latter at least struck probably within a decade of the Carthaginian overwhelming, show the wonderful advance made by coin art in both technique and composition.

The head on the former coin is a majestic, dignified conception; while the vigor and dash of the second quadriga show a similar mastery of his subject by the engraver. Here the bird of Zeus performs the office of our usual Nike in signifying a victory, — one well-deserved it would seem to him who twenty-three centuries later is carried along by the tumultuous rush of the spirited horses, — while on the earlier more conventional example we find a wreath of olive with the same symbolic meaning. The grain and ear of barley must recall the renowned fertility of that rich and well-watered plain between the protecting mountains and the sea, that "wheat-producing Gela" immortalized in Aeschylus' brief epitaph.

HIMERA, the first Greek settlement on the north coast, appears in 648 B. C., as an offshoot of Zankle, that still older town which from the century before had guarded for Sicily the narrow waters of her dividing strait. Presenting merely the usual political vicissitudes of a Greek city in alternate democracy and tyranny, her history demands our attention only at two decisive epochs — the years 480 and 409 — one so glorious, the other so humiliating to Sikeliot arms.

To attempt to predict the changed course of history, had such or such a decisive event resulted otherwise than it did, if sometimes a tempting, is always a futile task. But we cannot forbear trying to picture to ourselves how different would be our present world if, on that fateful summer's day in 480 B. C., the Carthaginians had been victorious at Himera, and the ponder-

ous galleys of Xerxes had overwhelmed the light Athenian triremes at Salamis.

With Greece a Persian satrapy, with all her freedom, energy and enterprise crushed beneath an Oriental despotism, the "Golden Age" of the fifth century, the struggles and achievements of the fourth, could never have been ; nor could Greece have produced those noble ideals of civil government and private life, those grand masterpieces of architecture, art and literature, which have had so potent an influence on all subsequent ages. Alexander would not have become the Great, nor would his richest bequest to mankind, that extension of the Greek tongue and civilization throughout the sluggish Asiatic world, have been, even remotely, a possibility.

With Sicily a province of Carthage, and thus always, for her Punic armies, a strong base of supply and attack against Rome in their almost equal struggle for universal rule, the Latin republic must surely have been crushed by her great African rival, and Italy, Spain and Gaul would have cowered beneath the rod of shophets from the city of Dido.

Nor can we refrain from a glance at the possible effect of such altered conditions upon religious beliefs. The noble truths of Christianity would not have found ready for their expression and diffusion the subtle, refined, scholarly, dignified Greek tongue, received throughout the known world as the language both of culture, and of commercial life. While in the extinction of that vast Roman empire which welded together the whole civilized world with its strong, uniform government, its equitable scheme of laws, and its systematic connection of cities and provinces by safe, accepted routes of travel, the spread of the Gospel must have been slow and uncertain.

The overwhelming defeat in 480 had made Himera an object of peculiar hatred to the Carthaginians, and after the destruction of Selinous by the next Punic expedition, that of 409, the hosts of Hannibal advanced across the island and laid siege to the city which had witnessed that ancient humiliation. Their opportunity had indeed at last come, and long-repressed schemes of vengeance were wrought out with a merciless, cold-blooded perfection of cruelty, possible only for barbaric conquerors. The town was captured after



a fierce struggle, all her men were offered up, with cruel torture and mutilation, as an atoning sacrifice to the shades of the general's defeated grandsire, old Hamilkar; the women and children were sold into slavery, and her walls, temples, palaces and dwellings were so utterly swept away that Himera ceased to exist.

## HIMERA.

135. Drachm, wt. 89 grs. Before 482 B. C. (Pl. XII: 5.) Obv. Cock advancing to right: border of large dots. Rev. Shallow incuse square of mill-sail pattern.

136. Drachm, wt. 88.5 grs. Before 482 B. C. (Pl. XII: 6.) Rev. Hen standing to right in incuse square.

137. Didrachm, wt. 130 grs. B. C. 482-472. (Pl. XII: 7.) Obv. HIMEPA Cock standing to left. Rev. Crab.

Although probably of Sikan origin, the name Himera in the minds of those light-hearted Greeks speedily became associated with the word *Ἡμέρα*, of similar sound in their own tongue; and it was most appropriate that the "city of the day" should assume for its coin type the familiar bird whose joyous chant proclaims so loudly and persistently the approach of dawn. Gabrici, however, the authority on these issues, in his exhaustive *Numismatica dell' Antica Imera*, gives the preference to the following interpretation, which would connect the cock with a local worship of Herakles.

We have already (No. 100) touched the legend of that tenth Herakleian labor which consisted in driving to King Eurystheus at Mykenai the fire-breathing oxen of Geryones from their home beneath the setting sun. In the course of this arduous expedition the hero had arrived in lower Italy, when one of his vicious charges escaping and swimming the strait, proceeded to take its way along the north Sicilian coast.

The indefatigable Herakles pursued, and at last finding the unruly animal concealed in the herd of a certain giant king, Eryx by name, promptly challenged him to a wrestling match. Eryx was slain, and as the demi-god reposed wearily after this victory he found grateful refreshment in some hot baths which the nymphs of the place, at Athene's command, most opportunely sent bubbling forth. Thus these same healing springs, which for twenty-five

centuries have given celebrity to Himera and its successors, ancient Thermai and modern Termini, were by the first inhabitants reverently dedicated to Herakles as the peculiar divinity of the spot.

This cock then would symbolize the worship of Herakles the Cleanser, and can have no reference to Asklepios the god of healing, although it is as his emblem that the bird usually appears, and that its presence here has been by some writers explained. Gardner illustrates our figure in proof of "the thesis that Greek art learned to represent animals with spirit and with truth long before it could fairly deal with the human frame." And surely the rude vigor here displayed could hardly be surpassed.

The first reverse shows us what may be called the second step in the development of coinage. As will appear most clearly in certain civic issues of Asia and Hellas, the earliest reverses were rude squares or "punch marks," of which the only example yet examined is shown in No. 14, Elea. A slight improvement in treatment gives us the present mill-sail pattern, while the next step was figured in No. 60, Syracuse, where a central head relieves the severity of the design. The final change of course presents a fully developed type on the reverse side as well as on the obverse.

Gabrici deduces from the simple form of incuse here used, found elsewhere in Sicily only at Selinous, that a Himeraian coin-issue of this character was among the first in the island, and should be dated towards the end of the sixth century. The hen which supplanted the earlier geometric pattern, while showing artistic progress, seems to have no significance beyond a certain appropriateness as the consort of the haughty obverse type.

Theron of Akragas having, about 482, expelled the tyrant Terillos from Himera and taken possession of the city, by this extension of the Akragantine territory from sea to sea opposed a constant barrier to the further advance of the Carthaginians, and the great Hellenic victory two years later established still more firmly his broad dominion. This subjection of Himera to Akragas for ten years — until Theron's death in 472 — is commemorated on our third reverse (No. 137), by an association of the recognized Akragantine type with the badge of Himera. In this connection it is interesting to observe

the change in weight standards, for the heavy drachm of Aiginetic weight is now supplanted in Theron's issue by an Attic didrachm, — the Attic drachm representing 67.5 grains. This system, having been from the first adopted in Akragas and the other Sikeliot settlements of Doric origin, shortly after became general throughout Sicily.

But the house of Theron was not destined to retain the supreme power, for Thrasydaïos' display of more than the usual folly and vicious oppression characteristic of a tyrant's son, soon gave both Himera and Akragas their wished-for freedom, which was preserved until the Carthaginian destruction of these cities.

138. Tetradrachm, wt. 265 grs. B. C. 472-415. (Pl. XII: 8.) Obv. Nymph Himera standing to left, sacrificing at altar; behind, small Seilenos to right washing in stream of water which flows from lion's head fountain; above, wheel of four spokes. Rev. IMEPAION (in exergue). Quadriga to left, horses walking; charioteer crowned by flying Nike: border of dots.

(From the Bunbury sale.)

139. Tetradrachm, wt. 266 grs. B. C. 415-409. (Pl. XII: 9.) Obv. Similar to last, but freer, more finished style, and above, grain of barley. Rev. IMEPAION (in exergue). Similar to last, but to right.

We have here another and fuller reference to the celebrated baths of Himera; a comprehensive summary in fact, of their ancient legendary origin, and of their salubrious qualities. The local nymph is reverently and gratefully sacrificing to the demi-god Herakles, while a small Seilenos bathes with a ludicrous contentment in the healing stream. Gabrici recalls to us that the Greeks had two ways of considering and representing rivers; one by personifying them, the other by imagining a likeness to certain fierce and ungovernable animals. So here the bronze lion's head from which the waters issue, represents the spring or source; a form of symbolism — varied at times by the head of a bull or wild boar — frequent on ancient bas-reliefs and coins, as for example, on No. 23 of Plate IV, Terina.

Seilenos in his early form was a sylvan deity presiding over streams and springs, so that he may here be considered in this character, before his lapse into that chronic state of drunken dissipation, which sad to say is commonly associated with his venerable appearance.

Turning to the first reverse we find again the victorious quadriga, and investigation shows us that the Himeraians were fully justified in assuming this type. For in 472 B. C., at the very beginning of a long and prosperous career of self-government there was sung in their temple of Tyche, before an enthusiastic and exultant concourse, the twelfth Olympic ode of Pindar, composed in honor of the hero whose athletic prowess had just conferred undying glory upon "potent Himera," his adopted city. "But now, O Ergoteles, having won the wreath in Olympia and twice having carried it off from Pytho, and twice on the Isthmus, thou dost exalt the nymph's warm baths." To this list of the athlete's triumphs Pausanias adds two later victories, won at Nemea. Such a glorious record, immortalized, as was the custom, by a statue placed among the victors at Olympia, surely deserved as well local recognition on this new coinage of the city which shared his renown; and the triumphant quadriga was the conventional method of representing not merely a chariot victory, but any success in the religious games. An early date is shown by the rigid uncouthness of these figures, both obverse and reverse, which are, however, especially those of the former, fine examples of the opening years of the transitional period.

Comparing with this our final example we recognize at once the wide artistic chasm which separates the two styles. Although the older coin is by a far more skillful artist, its almost archaic stiffness affords a strong contrast to the grace and mastery shown in the figure and pose of the later nymph and the modelling of the horses. The exaggerated folds of the Ionic dress, with its long-sleeved chiton and heavy himation, are now exchanged for a lightly draped robe which follows and defines the lines of the swaying figure.





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# ANCIENT GREEK COINS

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XIII  
SICILY, 3

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BY  
FRANK SHERMAN BENSON

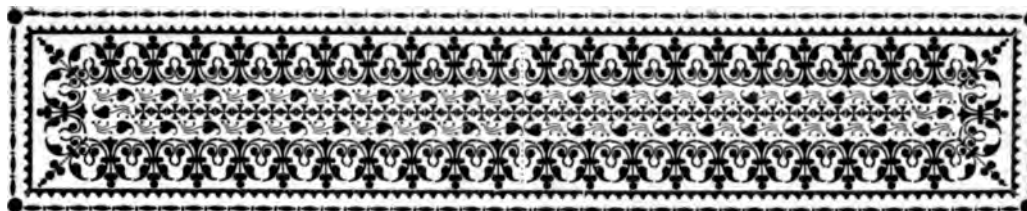


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## ANCIENT GREEK COINS.

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### XIII SICILY, 3. (KAMARINA, LEONTINOI.)



KAMARINA sprang into being to supply the need felt by Syracuse for a watchful ally on the south coast, where even before the sixth century a fierce thirst for conquest had so far extended her territories as to embrace the whole southeastern corner of Sicily. But the daughter city, almost from her foundation, in the year 598 B. C., disdaining the conventional role of an obedient colony, pursued an unexpected policy of bitter opposition to every interest of her founder. Thus, always warring, not only with neighboring towns—a Greek city's natural foes—but also with this hereditary protector, Kamarina underwent many vicissitudes, and we read of a speedy overthrow by exasperated Syracuse, recolonization, fresh ruin by the tyrant Gelon, and a third foundation, now by adjacent Gela, all in little more than her first century. This latest settlement, in 461, was however crowned by more favoring fortune, and we have the evidence of several noteworthy coin issues that Kamarina led a flourishing existence until the fatal year 405. Then, as we know, the Carthaginian invasion,

aided by Dionysios' treachery, spared not a single south Sicilian town, and in all of them numismatic production of any importance ceased with this crushing disaster.

#### KAMARINA.

140. Tetradrachm, wt. 270 grs. B. C. 461-405. (Pl. XIII: 1.) Obv. (KAMAPINA)ON Head of bearded Herakles to left, wearing lion's skin: plain border. Rev. Quadriga to left, horses galloping in step, and driven by Pallas wearing helmet and crowned by flying Nike; in exergue, crane flying to left: border of dots.

(From the Bunbury sale, 274.)

141. Tetradrachm, wt. 266 grs. B. C. 461-405. (Pl. XIII: 2.) Obv. Head of youthful Herakles to left, wearing lion's skin; in front, upper part of strung bow. Rev. KAMAPINA in exergue. Quadriga to right, horses galloping and driven by Pallas wearing helmet and crowned by flying Nike; also in exergue, two amphorae.

(From the Bunbury sale, 277.)

While studying the allusions to Herakles found on several Sicilian coins (Nos. 100, 127 and 135) we have briefly followed the hero's various fortunes on the island; but nowhere in these legends can we discern any reason why his worship should have secured so entire a pre-eminence among the cults of Kamarina as is evidenced by the constant appearance of his head on the obverse of her principal issues. Perhaps the proximity of Agyrium, the great Sikel stronghold where the demi-god on his westward journey was first recognized and first received divine honors, may have instilled into the minds of the Kamarinaians a feeling that their own Sikeliot town had also some peculiar claim.

But if the obverse type must remain obscure, the symbolism of the reverse quadriga is correspondingly simple, since Pindar comes to our aid in two of his Olympic odes. "For this is the triumphal procession of the victorious car of Psaumis, who crowned with Pisan olive, seeks to raise renown to Kamarina." His victory at Olympia occurred in the year 452 B. C., less than a decade after the third colonization of Kamarina, and when already there "was uniting quickly a high-grown forest of solid buildings, which should raise

from poverty to power this town of citizens." Psaumis' doubly acclaimed triumph must have contributed so largely to the growth and prosperity of the new foundation, as to permit our hope that always the Kamarinaians gratefully realized, for their illustrious fellow-citizen, the lyric poet's prayer, "Mayst thou a conqueror at Olympia, delighting in the horses of Poseidon, lead a tranquil old age to thy end, with thy sons, O Psaumis, around thee."

The unwonted presence of the goddess as charioteer of both victorious cars harmonizes with the invocation to "Pallas, protectress of cities," in that second ode presumably sung by the victor; while the importance of her worship at this moment of festal pomp is still further emphasized by the twin amphorae filled with her sacred oil.

Returning for a moment to the obverse type we should note the marked contrast pointed out by Professor Gardner between the fierceness of the older head and the soft effeminacy of the younger, where one could almost imagine an Omphale.

142. Didrachm, wt. 125 grs. B. C. 425-405. (Pl. XIII: 3.) Obv.  $\Sigma\text{I}\text{P}\text{A}\text{N}\text{N}\text{I}$  Head of river-god Hipparis to left; on either side, a river fish upwards: plain border. Rev.  $\text{ANIPAMAK}$  Nymph Kamarina seated to right with inflated veil, on swan swimming to left with spread wings; around, three fishes: border of dots.

(From the Evans sale, 47.)

Doubtless deeply imbued with the religious awe felt by all these early Greeks for springs and streams the Kamarinaians had personified their river Hipparis, whose flowing waters formed the lake below the town; and they now distinguished with his horned profile the main type of this probably latest civic issue. The dishevelled appearance of the hair seems peculiarly appropriate for a river-god, while the vigor and freshness of the features typify aptly the eternal renewal of rushing water.

But it is the reverse type which most attracts, for here poetic grace and tender delicacy combine to produce a remarkable composition. The nymph Kamarina, so proudly borne by the swan along the lake's surface, with a favoring breeze gently swelling her veil and sweeping along the pair amidst

sporting fishes, seems the prototype of that similar picture so vividly painted for us by the poet Moschos nearly three centuries later: "Meanwhile Europa, riding on the back of the divine bull, with one hand clasped the beast's great horn, and with the other caught up the purple fold of her garment, lest it might trail and be wet in the hoar sea's infinite spray. And her deep robe was swelled out by the winds, like the sail of a ship, and lightly still did waft the maiden onward."

The credit for this charming design rests with the great Euainetos, who seems—we know not why—to have left Syracuse for a period of years, during which there are found various signed examples of his production at Kamarina, Katane, and other neighboring towns. Here his obverse type, with a full face of Hipparis, as well as this his reverse composition were delicately imitated by the Kamarinaian engraver Exakestidas, whose signature appears on certain dies. Mr. Evans considers that the work of the local artist can be distinguished by a tunic which drapes the nymph's bust, while the treatment of the Syracusan master leaves the upper part of her delicate figure nude.

The constant goal of the numismatist must be truth, not alone in the description and interpretation of his coins, but as well in the unveiling of those attractive side lights with which this study illumines contemporaneous history. So now stern justice compels the writer to add that according to all ancient evidence the famed lake of Kamarina, far from being a pure, sun-kissed, wind-stirred sheet of water, was undeniably, for certain seasons of the year, a pestilential swamp. In fact so dangerous were its miasmas to the health of the city that the Kamarinaians had, many years before, formally requested from the oracle at Delphi permission to drain it; and when forbidden, had in defiance of the god proceeded to carry out their design. Clearly did every Greek recognize the divine vengeance, slow-footed but relentless, when in that year so fatal to Sikeliot freedom the besieging Carthaginians were able to force an entrance to the city on this northern side, then no longer protected by the swampy lake; and the Delphic warning "Remove not Kamarina: unmoved 'tis better far" took its place among familiar Hellenic proverbs.

But the greater the genius, the greater should be the poetic license, and if Euainetos saw the lake in times of flood, and pictured it for us as the enchanted home of river-god and nymph, surely all posterity has been by just so much the gainer.

Unfortunately, as appears on the plate, this example is badly preserved. We regret but we accept the usual wear which comes to a coin from long circulation in a busy civic life; yet when a piece still in good condition had by accident or design once found the hiding-place where it was destined to repose during more than twenty centuries, we have a right to feel aggrieved if mother Earth shows herself no tender guardian, but actually takes a share in the work of destruction. For often, and especially in the volcanic, sulphur-impregnated lands of Sicily, a slow but steady disintegration seems to have gone on during all the time of concealment; and this coin is a clear example of what damage can be produced after one could reasonably expect that all danger of injury was over. With a more common coin, a finer example could perhaps be secured, but the extreme rarity of these didrachms makes each one a treasure, of which even poor condition cannot affect the joy of possession, nor spoil the artistic charm.



LEONTINOI in her early foundation by Chalkidians from Naxos in 728 B. C., changes the scene again to the east coast, where, at a point little more than a score of miles from Doric Syracuse, the new city stood guard over the most fertile plain in Sicily. Rich and independent for her first two hundred years, Leontinoi could not withstand the grasping ambition of those great tyrants of the early fifth century, and passed under the rule first of Hippokrates, and then of the Geloan dynasty. She recovered her freedom, however, after the downfall of this house, and in the year 466 entered upon her period of greatest prosperity. This happy condition was indeed destined to prove short-

lived ; although it was not the African invader, barbaric conqueror of so many fair Sicilian cities, who overwhelmed Leontinoi, but Syracuse her watchful and ambitious neighbor, against whom as indeed against all Doric pre-eminence Leontinoi had long openly plotted and intrigued. For at last even the powerful alliance of Athens could not save her from the consequences of such indiscreet boldness, and in 422 the Chalkidic city passed finally, except for two brief glimpses of independence while the Deliverers made her their base of operations, under the rule of her great rival.

Few Sicilian coins were struck before 500 B. C., and thus we must limit the coin life of Leontinoi to little more than three-quarters of a century. By this of course, here as elsewhere in such connection, is meant the coinage of silver, since the issue of bronze obtained generally for centuries after the extinction of all civic self-government ; even the Romans allowing a copious outflow of the baser metal.

#### LEONTINOI.

143. Tetradrachm, wt. 265 grs. *circa* 479 B. C. (Pl. XIII: 4.) Obv. AEONTI(NO)N Head of Apollo to right laureate ; around, three laurel leaves ; beneath, lion springing to right. Rev. Quadriga to right, horses walking ; charioteer crowned by flying Nike ; beneath, lion running to right.

(From the Bunbury sale, 327.)

144. Tetradrachm, wt. 265 grs. B. C. 500-466. (Pl. XIII: 5.) Obv. AEONTI(NO)N Lion's head to right with open jaws ; around, four barleycorns. Rev. Quadriga to right, horses walking and crowned by flying Nike : border of dots.

(From the Montagu sale, 105.)

From these and the following coins we see that the god whom all Leontines held in highest reverence and regarded as their tutelary deity was Apollo, just as it is shown with equal clearness that they considered the lion his peculiar emblem. The fertility of the adjacent plain, symbolized by these grains of barley, played so large a part in Leontine prosperity, that the character in which Apollo here appears is undoubtedly his primeval one of Phoibos, the

sun-god. Of highest import indeed to all tillers of the soil was the cult of this powerful divinity, acclaimed in each blossoming spring-time as beneficent protector of the germinating crops; then later, as the season advanced, worshipped with such propitiatory offerings as might avert those malign influences he ruled, the parching heat and destructive drought; and at last with all the joyous rites of an autumnal harvest festival gratefully thanked for the mellowed products of the soil.

The former coin possesses likewise vivid historic interest; for a marked similarity of type and treatment, although by a different hand, justifies its precise attribution to the same period and to the celebration of the same great event as that important issue of Syracuse, designated the Demareteion-class (No. 68). In 480 Leontinoi was a Syracusan subject city, and although we have, perhaps for some such reason, no record of the part she played in the great victory, undoubtedly Leontine forces marched under Gelon to Himera, and nothing could seem more probable than that the tyrant or subservient citizens should have initiated the coinage of Leontinoi by a victorious and commemorative issue similar to that of the first city of Sicily, the preserver of Sikeliot freedom. The fleeing African lion beneath a victory-crowned quadriga thus symbolizes even for an enslaved commonwealth as glorious an event as any in the story of Sicily.

Some have seen in those three laurel sprays surrounding the god's head an endeavor of Greek symbolism to show that Apollo's temple was situated, as is indeed most likely, in a grove of his sacred trees. The pose of this springing lion beneath—unfortunately obscure on my example owing to incorrect centering—so unlike the fleeing Punic beast of the reverse, implies a different signification, and would symbolize merely that for some reason there was, as has been said, a close connection in the minds of the Leontines between Apollo and the lion. Thus too it is clear why later this animal became the principal type of the city, although on coins its full figure was discarded for the head alone, as presenting on this small scale a more impressive appearance. We need not long consider a fanciful suggestion that the lion was chosen for the civic badge from the similarity of the animal's name to that of



the city, this too having been first christened after its site, a very place of lions.

145-147. Tetradrachms, wts. 266-262 grs. B. C. 466-422. (Pl. XIII: 6-8.) Obv. Head of Apollo to right, laureate. Rev. AEONTINON Lion's head to right or left with open jaws; around, four barleycorns, or three with the fourth replaced by laurel leaf, or tripod.

(The last from the Wotoch sale, 223.)

The Leontine series, taking these three heads in connection with No. 143, presents a fine example of artistic sequence; in which the strength and stiffness of archaism, the direct simplicity of transition, and the dignity, elegance, and refinement of the fine-art period are beautifully and characteristically distinguished.

The awe-inspiring lion's head has now been transferred to the reverse, while for one of the barleycorns there is in the later period substituted a leaf of Apollo's laurel, or a tripod, constant symbol of this god when he is considered as the inspiration of the Delphic prophetess.

Although limited space precludes more than the briefest reference to my position regarding an important and still vexed question among numismatists, namely, which side of a coin should properly be considered the obverse and which the reverse; yet from the arrangement of these Leontine coins, of my Syracusans, and of other examples already considered, it will be evident that I follow the older school of writers.

These authorities, Dr. Imhoof-Blumer, Dr. Head, Professor Gardner and Mr. Evans, have maintained that the obverse always presents the type worthy of highest honor, such as the full figure, head, or symbol of god or goddess, the peculiar badge of a city, or some other similar characteristic and honorable device; while they leave for the reverse all less dignified compositions, the quadriga, the horseman, or even the civic badge in those cases where a god's simulacrum may have usurped the obverse.

But within the last few years has arisen a new school led by Mr. G. F. Hill, of the British Museum, one of our most distinguished writers, the adherents of which, establishing a purely arbitrary distinction, claim that, technically considered, the obverse is always the convex side, the product, as we saw in the Introduction, of the lower die which was sunk in the anvil. It would follow then that concavity of surface would always mark the reverse side.

While this rule affords, it must be confessed, a positive indication regarding almost all Greek coins, yet the theory thus formulated is so often opposed to all their artistic and religious aspects as to lead its disciples into many inconsistencies, and to strengthen our belief that no such merely scientific classification could have obtained in ancient times among the designers, possessors and circulators of these coins.

For if we take a passing glance at simply the religious feature of the question, we find that in Nos. 143 and 144 (Pl. XIII: 4 and 5) this new system would make the obverse display a quadriga; while Apollo, the revered tutelary god of Leontinoi, whose devout worship her types and symbols proclaim, would be consigned to the reverse; as would likewise be the case with the lion's head, by far the most important of these divine symbols.

It is well known that the charge of impiety was one of the most awful which could be brought against a Greek, who would feel that conviction and the death penalty were almost certain; and no reader of Greek history can forget either the cruel trial of Aspasia thus accused, where all the eloquence and influence of Pericles at the height of his power barely secured an acquittal for his beloved companion, or the fate of Pheidias and of Alkibiades who, similarly charged, sought by self-imposed banishment to escape a certain doom.

These events occurred in the latter half of the fifth century, and surely at its commencement, when religious beliefs were still more powerful, no Sicilian die-engraver would have dared give the preference to a quadriga, mere symbol of temporal glory, and thus openly outrage the high gods by relegating great Apollo to the inferior, reverse side of his coin. For he would have realized that to place in the hands of his fellow-citizens such conclusive evidence of religious scepticism could have had only the gravest consequences.

Every genuine enthusiast in the pursuit of this special branch of numismatics serenely feels that the Greek coinage in many respects excels all others ; and one of the most pronounced of these superiorities consists in an entire absence of the commonplace. Surely then we, both as collectors and as students, should not strive to fetter with an unchangeable scientific law these charming illustrations of the true spirit permeating all Hellenic art and religion, nor should we wish to deprive them of that freedom which with the Greek was a ruling passion, often indeed so blindly cherished as to work the very destruction of all it strove to uphold.





ANCIENT GREEK SILVER COINS FROM THE BENSON COLLECTION.

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# ANCIENT GREEK COINS

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XIV  
SICILY, 4

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BY  
FRANK SHERMAN BENSON



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1904



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## ANCIENT GREEK COINS.

### XIV. SICILY, 4. (KATANE).



**K**ATANE, twin sister of Leontinoi, was founded by a Chalkidic expedition of Naxian colonists similar to that which earlier in the same year, 728 B. C., had established "the city of lions." Placed in like manner on the east coast of Sicily but much nearer the mother city, at a point where the little Amenanos flows into the Ionian Sea, this new settlement, alone of Greek towns, was exposed from its situation to a constant menace of the most terrible of physical convulsions. For in its very streets began — as begins in the Catania of to-day — that long rise of the black lava-encrusted slopes of ever-smoking Aetna, "from whose recesses purest fountains of unapproachable fire spout forth;" and down the centuries eruption after eruption has overwhelmed the city, or, sparing it by a miracle, has yet changed every aspect of surrounding nature and grievously contracted the once spacious harbor.

The first two hundred and fifty years were passed in happy independence, but the early fifth century finds Katane, like Leontinoi, part of the domain of Hieron I; and in 476 the city suffered that disastrous fortune which produced the complete if temporary eclipse of her name and identity. For Hieron,



eager to realize his life-dream of being, like his greater brother, worshipped as a genuine founder, drove forth from Katane all her Chalkidic inhabitants, then as oikist repopled the now solitary city with fresh settlers of his own race, and to crown the illusion rechristened this new foundation, giving it a name already world-renowned as borne by the overshadowing mountain. Thus it was in honor of "King Hieron, founder of Aitna," that Pindar composed the first Pythian ode, in which he celebrates his patron's chariot victory at Delphi two years later; and the rare civic coins of this period are all inscribed AITNAION.

Hieron's welcome death, however, soon brought renewed independence, and the city, once again Katane and free, enjoyed her full share of the general Sicilian prosperity for the next half century. Forced in 415 to become an ally of the invaders from the mother country, and occupied by the Athenians as headquarters during the entire war, Katane cannot however have shared their disastrous fate; for we hear of her forces again warring, not unsuccessfully, with Syracuse, several years after the crushing Athenian overthrow.

The next foe was however not to be so easily repulsed, being no less a conqueror than Dionysios, who having gained possession of the place by treachery, proceeded at once with his usual cold-blooded thoroughness, to sell the entire population into slavery, and to repopulate with his Italian mercenaries these dwellings, for the second time empty.

Thus in 402 Katane ceased to exist as a Greek city, and with this extinction of Hellenic life there comes to an end as a consequence her century of Greek coin-issues. These we shall find marked by interesting contrasts, certain types displaying strong and noble qualities, while other examples are distinguished by every extreme of that delicate refinement so characteristic of Sicilian engravers.

#### KATANE.

148. Tetradrachm, wt. 265 grs. Before 476 B. C. (Pl. XIV: 1.) Obv. Man-headed bull kneeling to right on right knee; on his back, Seilenos kneeling to right with left arm outstretched; in exergue, sea-monster: border of dots. Rev. KATANAI-ON Winged Nike advancing to left, bearing fillet in extended right hand.

(From the London sale, May, 1900; No. 87.)

The coinage of Katane opens with this remarkable issue, of whose types unfortunately no certain explanation can be offered. The man-headed bull — Mr. Hill infers from the bent knee that, like the bull of Gela, he is swimming — symbolizes of course, as in those Geloan designs (Nos. 131–134), the rushing river of the place. But the exact significance of the kneeling or running figure of Seilenos above seems yet undiscovered, — unless as in the case of the next coin, some local myth brought from the mother city is suggested — while the same doubt exists regarding the sea-monster below. It will be remembered that Hieron I, of Syracuse, by the employment of this marine symbol on his coins (Nos. 69–77), purposed to immortalize the memory of his glorious annihilation of that great Etruscan naval power, whose piratical expeditions had always imperilled Hellenic prosperity in the western Mediterranean. The ancient historians give us so few details of this great achievement, that in spite of their silence in this connection we could picture to ourselves among the Syracusan allies the neighboring Katane, and could explain that the pistrix was here depicted with the same symbolism as on Hieron's issues; an hypothesis further strengthened by the full figure of Victory on the reverse. Unfortunately, however, this pleasing theory can be at once disproved, since the great sea-fight took place in 474, just two years after the temporary cessation of Katanaian coinage. For it was in 476 that Hieron had, as we have seen, depopulated the captured Katane, recolonized it, and as oikist changed the name to Aitna, always to be henceforth, as he vainly hoped, his own peculiar city.

This sea-monster then must simply refer to the maritime situation of Katane, just as the principal figure typifies the stream of Amenanos on whose banks the city stood.

149. Litra, wt. 12 grs. B. C. 476. (Pl. XIV: 2.) Obv. Head of bearded Seilenos to right, bound with wreath of vine-leaves: border of dots. Rev. KATANE Winged thunderbolt.

This interesting little coin commemorates a continued close connection with the mother city Naxos, where we shall find with surprise, when studying

Naxian issues, that the aged sottish Seilenos is represented as one of the most respected deities of the place. The date of this issue must have been almost immediately before the great change in Katane's fortunes, as is shown by the finished style of the head. The inscription is of unusual interest; as well from its peculiar letter forms, as from its giving a rare variation in the civic name; a simple nominative singular being substituted for the customary genitive plural.

150-152. Tetradrachms, wts. 267-259 grs. B. C. 461-415. (Pl. XIV: 3-5.) Obv. KATANAION Head of Apollo to right, laureate. Rev. Quadriga to right driven by male charioteer, horses walking.

(No. 151 from the Trist sale, 42.)

These issues commence with the return of the banished Katanaians to their native city in 461, and display heads of Apollo which are fine examples of Transitional work. The drunken Seilenos has now been abandoned to Naxos, and the Katanaians show their final adoption of the great Hellenic god for their principal divinity. This is not the beneficent ripener of crops, the Phoibos Apollo who watched over Leontinoi (No. 143), but that more powerful incarnation of the deity who as Apollo Archêgetês (Founder and Guide) received at the mother city Naxos divine honors in the most famous shrine of all this great island. No formal embassy to or from a Sikeliot city, no lithe-limbed contestant joyously departing for the great games of old Greece, no true-hearted hero from the mother country landing in Sicily to free from their tyrants her supplicating daughter cities, would have dared neglect the propitiatory sacrifice at this revered altar, or have ventured to anticipate success without this divine approbation.

153. Tetradrachm, wt. 267 grs. B. C. 415. (Pl. XIV: 6.) Obv. KATANAION Head of Apollo to right laureate; behind, river fish. Rev. Quadriga to right, horses in high action and crowned by flying Nike; in exergue, crayfish.

(From the Munich sale, May, 1903; No. 889.)

Although no change is yet noticeable in the types, it need hardly be suggested to the student that especial attention should be paid to this obverse,

which at a glance is seen to present one of the most pleasing heads to be found in the entire range of coin art. The refined delicacy of the features, the pensive melancholy of expression, the quiet artistic arrangement of the hair, and the graceful poise of the head produce a well-nigh matchless combination; to which charms, evident though veiled in the illustration, it may be added that the coin itself possesses a wonderful grey tone, subdued and idealized by the most tender of patinas.

Such refinement of modelling and such detail produce, it is true, a characteristic example of that effeminacy towards which more and more the beauty-loving Greeks were borne in representations of this favorite god, the peculiarly national divinity, in whom their beliefs concentrated all the most brilliant and attractive elements of their own versatile natures. For this reason one should not here seek those qualities of manly vigor or reposeful dignity, which so many examples have taught us surely to expect in heads of the adventurous Python-slayer, the stern destroyer of wicked and presumptuous men; and we must rather be grateful that our artist has grasped a heaven-sent inspiration of Apollo in his lighter moods, as the god of song, and music, and love; almost in fact as the twin brother of Aphrodite rather than of Artemis.

An interesting question arises in connection with the reverse type. Among the obverses of Hieron I, figured on plate V, appears a girlish head, No. 18, whose quadriga—not there illustrated unfortunately—is distinguished among its fellows by the superior style of its prancing horses, and by the more natural treatment of its eager charioteer. This decided artistic advance is most evident, as we study not only the contemporaneous reverse groups, but also those for the next half century, shown on the first three lines of plate VI. For in each of these a constrained stiffness of attitude marks both the slowly walking horses, and the stolid figure who is presumably urging them on. Yet the sea-monster below the quadriga of No. 18 must here, as always in that period, denote Hieron's issues, while the head fits so perfectly into its niche towards the close of his reign, as to be capable of this attribution alone.

Hieron died in 466. What then is our surprise to discover now within a few years of the Fine-Art period (the present head can surely admit no

other date) a group precisely similar in all respects — prancing posture of the horses, artistic development, and general treatment. The explanation is probably a natural one, that the later engraver inspired with that love for archaic types which at various periods was so prevalent among Greeks, selected for imitation this Syracusan model, wherein he found simplicity of treatment — the double outlines of two horses typifying four — combined with a freedom and an originality not yet attained by Katanaian issues: surely for the old artist of Hieron's reign the sincerest of compliments.

154. Tetradrachm, wt. 262 grs. B. C. 415-402. (Pl. XIV: 7.) Obv. KATANAIQN Head of Apollo to left, laureate; on right, crayfish; on left, fillet with bell attached. Rev. Quadriga to left, rounding the turning-post, horses galloping, charioteer crowned by flying Nike who bears tablet inscribed EYAIN; under horses' feet, pellet; triple exergual line; in exergue, crab: border of dots.

(From the Bunbury sale, 286.)

We have seen (No. 142) how Euainetos left the impress of his genius on Kamarinaian issues, and during the same absence from Syracuse we find him at Katane engraving several dies, some signed as in this case, and some distinguished only by his characteristic technique. This coin is a striking example of the master's most highly finished style, charming us by the delicacy and detail of its refined head, while at the same time compelling our admiration for the character and breadth of the composition as a whole.

The crayfish, barely visible on the right, is of course the usual river symbol, but the curious object in the left field requires some explanation. One sees here a good illustration of the tainia or fillet with which in sacrificial ceremonies, especially that of Apollo, it was customary to adorn the heads of priests or of victims — the *Apollinis infula* of Vergil's Aeneid. This ornament consisted of a long flock of red and white wool, bound at intervals by white or purple ribbons which, coming together in the ring above, attached the fillet to the head. From the lower end is hanging a bell, such as was often used in the cult of Dionysos; but Mr. Hill's theory that here it is probably the private signet of a monetary magistrate, seems hardly admissible. For the custom that each presiding official should mark his coin issues with

some distinctive symbol, thus openly admitting a full responsibility for both weight and fineness, while as rare in Sicily as it was common in certain cities of Magna Graecia (Taras for example), was yet followed in neither country until some fifty or a hundred years later. Nor so early as this would a mere civic office-holder have dared attach his private seal to a purely religious symbol. May not this rather have been the copy of an actual fillet whereon the pendent bell was simply intended to accompany or punctuate with its silvery notes the ritual chant?

As Professor Gardner points out, this obverse belongs to a class of coins which justify Mr. Poole in his theory that many Sicilian die engravers were also gem cutters. He calls attention to a certain hardness about the outlines, a minuteness of detail and a narrowness of treatment which are clear proofs that the designer-engraver of this head was well accustomed to the harder surface and more restricted possibilities of intaglio work. Hypercriticism surely and needless evidence in this instance, for there can indeed exist little doubt that Euainetos engraved gems as well as coin dies. Mr. Arthur Evans has illustrated for us a sard lately found near Catania, which, presenting the group of Herakles strangling the Nemean lion, seems identical in style, character and treatment with the signed gold staters engraved by Euainetos for Syracuse.<sup>1</sup>

The reverse, treated in a broader spirit, seems in every way admirable, unless, as in a similar instance (No. 88 of Syracuse) we should condemn as in bad taste and unworthy of such a master the inscribed tablet borne aloft in Nike's left hand. The whole group is in Euainetos' best early manner, and, while it vividly recalls his Syracusan tetradrachm, the more tumultuous action of its horses shows greater mastery of both technique and composition. Their figures are bold, well modelled and vigorous; the charioteer leans forward stimulating with the goad his off horses and restraining with the reins his near ones, that they may round, in a swift yet not disastrous whirl, the dangerous turning-post, here — the customary pillar — just visible on the extreme right of the coin.

<sup>1</sup> The only engraver whose signature appears on a gem as well as on a coin is ΦΤΤΙΑΔΟΣ, whose charming Syracusan work has already received our unstinted praise. (Nos. 90 and 91.)

155. Drachm, wt. 65.5 grs. B. C. 415-402. (Pl. XIV: 8.) Obv. AMENANOΞ  
Head of youthful river-god Amenanos to left, diademed; around, two river-fishes and  
crayfish. Rev. KATANAIQN in exergue. Quadriga to right, horses galloping, chari-  
oteer crowned by flying Nike: border of dots.

(From the Bunbury sale, 291.)

156. Tetradrachm, wt. 265 grs. B. C. 415-402. (Pl. XIV: 9.) Obv. KATANA-  
IQN Head of river-god Amenanos to left, diademed; hair dishevelled: border of dots.  
Rev. Quadriga to left, horses in high action, charioteer crowned by flying Nike; triple  
exergual line; in exergue H: border of dots.

The first and smaller coin although not bearing the signature of Euainetos is also surely his work, for almost similar drachms show the cabalistic EYAIN which marks the summit of Sicilian if not of all coin art. But the head is no longer that of Apollo; for the distinctive inscription, the dank unkempt hair, and the change from laurel wreath to diadem, all denote the river-god Amenanos, the same whom the earliest coinage represented as a man-headed beast. These two issues show in a most interesting manner their connection, distant in time, yet close in symbolism, for the god still bears on his forehead a horn, the evident survival of that which marks the old man-headed bull. Without some such logical explanation, this frequent adjunct of a personified river-god would present a puzzling problem.

The head is a charming one, with delicate ingenuous features; and its including frame formed by the crayfish, the two fresh-water fishes, and the inscription, introduces a pleasing conceit, not of course new, but still possessing a happy symmetry as attractive as it is appropriate.

The second coin discovers the same river-god; but its larger size accentuates the dishevelled condition of his hair, and there is now no trace of a horn; this later representation of the local deity having finally assumed the purely human shape. Indeed the artist's whole treatment displays such bold naturalism in a theme usually approached in a spirit of pure convention as to remind us of modern rather than of Greek art instincts.





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ANCIENT GREEK SILVER COINS FROM THE BENSON COLLECTION.

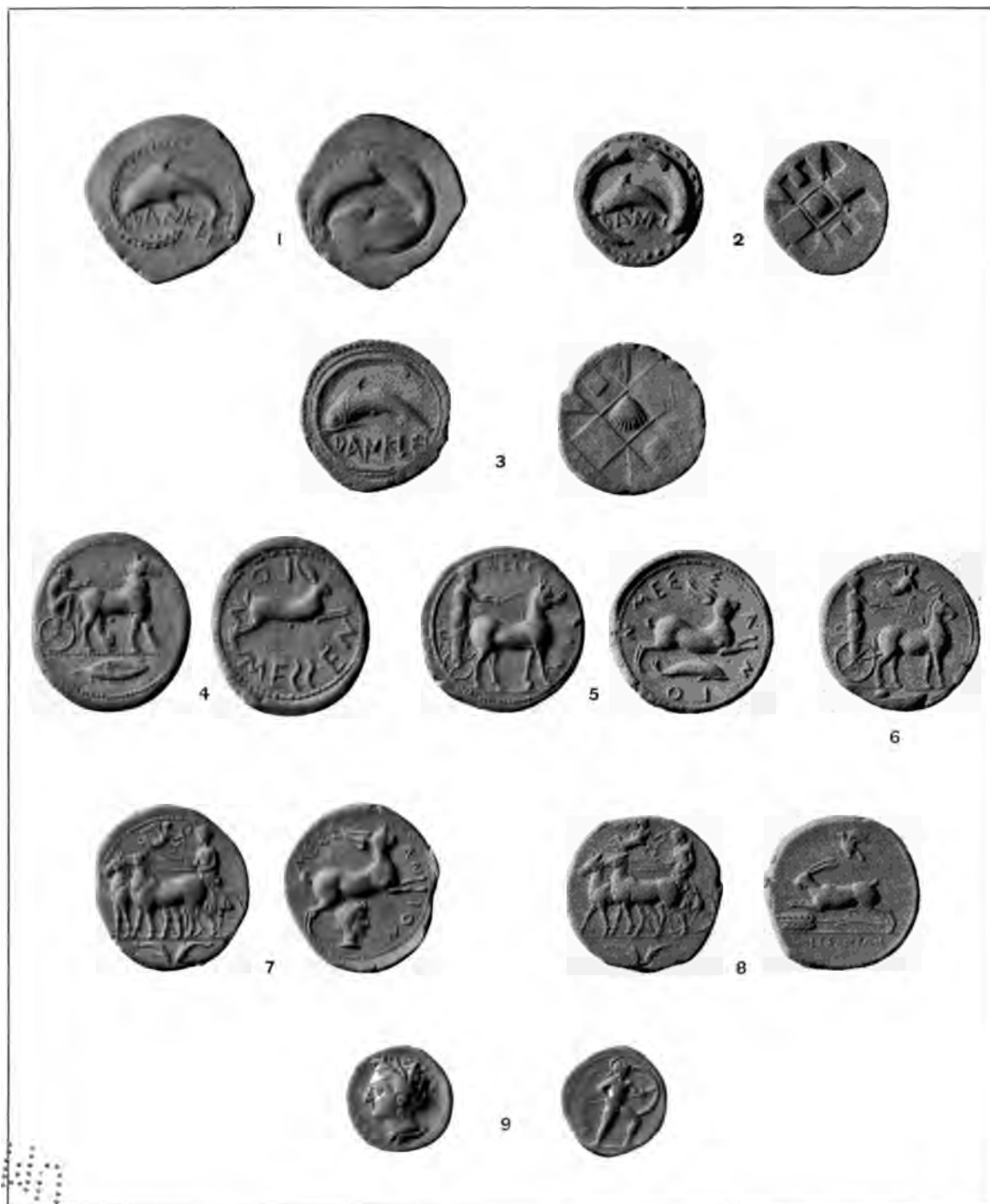
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ANCIENT GREEK SILVER COINS FROM THE BENSON COLLECTION

# ANCIENT GREEK COINS

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XV

SICILY, 5. (ZANKLE — MESSANA)

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BY

FRANK SHERMAN BENSON

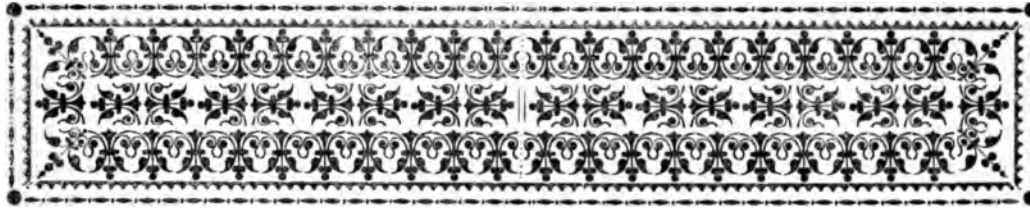


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## ANCIENT GREEK COINS.

XV. SICILY, 5. (ZANKLE — MESSANA).



OUR oldest historical record of Sicily tells that at the extreme northeastern corner, where the strait is at its narrowest, there lay a spacious harbor almost enclosed by the slender promontory which curved around its waters in the shape of a reaping-hook. At this spot, the true gateway of the island, must have landed those hordes of warlike Sikels, who centuries before had been ferried across in rude rafts from their native Italian shore for the conquest of helpless Sicily; which, once accomplished, the invaders were doubtless so impressed by the importance of the site as to lose no time in establishing here their first permanent settlement.

The story of aboriginal Zankle, as it was naturally named from *zanklon*, the Sikel word for reaping-hook, was probably uneventful until broken by the appearance of the first Greek settlers. These were, however, merely private adventurers from Italy, whose informal foundation was made official by the arrival in 715 B. C., of a colonizing expedition from Chalkis and Kyme conjointly, led by duly accredited founders. No further change occurred, it would seem, until the year 493, when, during the war between Skythes, ruling



king of Zankle, and Anaxilas, tyrant of Rhegion, the former's generous but rash offer of hospitality to the fleeing exiles from Miletos received such base return at the hands of these treacherous strangers, that in the end Skythes, whom Herodotus calls "the most righteous of the Greeks," found himself banished to the court of King Darius; while Anaxilas had become undisputed master of Zankle as well as of his hereditary domain across the strait. The order of events now becomes somewhat uncertain; but it was only a few years after these disturbances that Anaxilas expelled his Samian fellow-conspirators, and imposed upon the city a new name, both to emphasize his complete overthrow of the ancient government, and to honor his remote Messenian ancestors. So that henceforth on its coinage and in its history Zankle is known as Messena, or later Messana,—the Dorian influence soon predominating over the Ionian.

In the fifth century Messana displayed even greater instability than most Sicilian towns, owing to the unsettled character of her population, which was continually varied by the influx of new and sometimes turbulent elements. Thus we find frequent and sudden reversals of policy as one party or the other gains the ascendant; the city now allied, now at enmity with neighboring towns; and when the great question arose, first favoring the Athenian alliance, then wholly devoted to Syracuse.

Threatened by Dionysios, who left in peace few West Hellenic cities of his time, and preserved from this attack by Carthage, not a new but always an unnatural ally for a Greek commonwealth, Messana was at one period the only free city in all Sicily; for with this exception the entire island was, about the year 400, ruled by one or other of these implacable foes. But with the new century appeared the carefully planned expedition of Himilkon, whose resistless forces, after regaining all that Dionysios had so slowly and laboriously wrested from the Carthaginians, next proceeded to the capture of Messana; a capture no sooner accomplished than the haughty shophet with solemn and impressive religious forms deliberately levelled to the ground this fair city, in mute yet expressive symbolism that thus relentlessly might he and his country be expected to deal with aught that bore the name of Greek.

This destruction of Messana in 396 terminated its civic coinage, so that although the city, restored by Dionysios, continued to display more or less activity during the remaining Greek period, its further history need not occupy our attention.

## ZANKLE.

157. Drachm, wt. 92 grs. B. C. 550-500. (Pl. XV: 1.) Obv. ΔANKΛΕ Dolphin swimming to left, within a raised partly-open curving band, bordered on each side by dots. Rev. Same type and border, incuse, to right.

(From the Evans sale, 1898; No. 61.)

This, the earliest of the Zanklaian series, introduces their constant type, which, like that of the Syracusan tetradrachms, would symbolize the city's maritime situation. A dolphin, emblem of the flowing sea, sports within a sickle-shaped three-quarter circle, the curve of which of course denotes the tongue of land forming the harbor, just as the opening signifies its entrance. We should mark this inscription, which, in the rare nominative, shows that the actual form of the name, as handed down from the Sikels, was Dankle.

But that which excites the liveliest interest in connection with this coin is the fact that nowhere else in Sicily is there a reverse type which presents the incuse copy of its obverse. To find a similar peculiarity, we must return to Magna Graecia, where we have seen, in discussing the examples of this character shown on Plate I, that in the sixth century there existed a commercial league, composed of the leading Achaian cities, whose coinage was uniformly of this incuse pattern, and whose copious issues attest the general wealth and prosperity. Except in the case of Sybaris (No. 7), commerce between Greek cities was carried on for the most part by coasting vessels; and the present coin is clear evidence that Zankle, although a Chalkidic and hence an alien town, was deemed worthy of membership in the powerful Magna Graecian confederation. Her strong situation, commanding the narrowest passage of the dividing strait, must have occasioned this friendly action of the Italiot cities; all, and especially Kroton, eager to grasp a share of that lucrative Etruscan trade which had made Sybaris so wealthy and powerful.

Then, too, the peculiar circumstances of the coin's discovery, which fortunately have been so carefully preserved for us by Mr. Arthur Evans, and described by him at length in the *Numismatic Chronicle* for 1896, give this example an added interest. In the course of 1895 some workmen, who were engaged near modern Messina in constructing a tram line on the Catania road, while blasting rocks found a pot which contained a small hoard of Zanklaian and Naxian coins. Six were of this archaic incuse design, never before even suspected in connection with a Sicilian mint; while the early style of the remaining examples was such as to justify Mr. Evans in assigning for the date of their concealment the year 403, when we have seen the Samian and Milesian refugees so treacherously seizing the city.

Our coin thus strangely preserved, and no less strangely discovered, brings vividly before us the tumultuous scenes of twenty-four centuries ago.

Miletos, "the glory of Ionia," wealthy, populous, magnificent, the last hope of Hellenic freedom in Asia, had fallen; and its more energetic citizens, scorning to bear a foreign yoke, together with some Samians who equally despaired of their country, had as homeless fugitives sailed across the twin seas to hospitable Zankle. What must have been the alarm and consternation of the unsuspecting Zanklaians when these strangers, warmly welcomed as the invited guests of their absent king, straightway commenced the ruthless slaughter of the few warriors left behind to guard the city, and the indiscriminate seizure of the women and children for their slaves. What scenes of despairing flight and cruel separation must have followed! Was it then that some aged man escaping by night, and finding the pursuit too fierce, or his failing strength too weak for the burden, hid in this rock crevice his little pot filled with the savings of a life of toil? Or was such the deed of some strong young warrior who saw in this concealment just before an impending clash of arms, his one hope for the future fulfillment of his dreams, a happy life of tranquil ease amidst welcome family cares?

Or perhaps some survivor of this first massacre found his need for hurried departure when, as overlord, powerful Hippokrates burst upon the troubled scene, to banish with true tyrannical injustice the outraged king,

and to hand over the city formally to his betrayers. Or did this dire extremity arise some few years later when Anaxilas, deceiving and smiting friend and foe alike, seized the city for his own?

None can say; but that he whose fears or hopes were hidden with this hoard never again returned to claim his cherished treasure, is the one thing certain. So too we feel that those were days full of horror and despair, days when shameless greed and treacherous ingratitude formed the ruling motives of men's actions; and when even the most righteous cause was helpless as opposed to possession and unscrupulous power. Such is the illuminating glimpse into a dim and distant past which this long-forgotten relic of its ancient life affords the least imaginative student.

158. Drachm, wt. 89 grs. B. C. 500-493. (Pl. XV: 2.) Obv. ΔANK Dolphin swimming to left, within a raised partly-open curving band, on which are four square projections; border of dots. Rev. Incuse key pattern, within which, a scallop shell.

(From the Evans sale, 1898; No. 62.)

159. Drachm, wt. 91 grs. B. C. 500-493. (Pl. XV: 3.) Obv. ΔANKΛΕ Similar to last, but without projections. Rev. Similar to last.

While these coins present the same general type of Zankle for their obverse, the former example shows a variation worthy of careful attention. On the curved band symbolizing the projecting tongue of land are four rectangular protuberances, in which Mr. Evans finds representations of the four forts which guarded the harbor; each fort being the special charge and privilege of one of the four tribes into which from their varied origin the city was divided. The reverse figure is probably made thus intricate without any peculiar meaning except as regards its shell, always a symbol of the sea's proximity.

The last example shows the "sickle" in its plainest form, and it is of pieces after this pattern that the usual and rather copious coinage of Zankle is composed. Examples of the fortification type are more or less rare; while of the incuse design only the six specimens from this Messina find are known.

We should add that, like other early Chalkidic colonies, Zankle followed in her coin weights the Aiginetic standard, and we thus find the three drachms just considered approximating to the maximum 97 grains of Aigina and the Islands.

MESSANA.

160. Tetradrachm, wt. 267 grs. B. C. 480-420. (Pl. XV: 4.) Obv. Biga of mules walking to right, driven by bearded charioteer, seated; in exergue, olive leaf; border of dots. Rev. MEΞΞENION Hare running to right; border of dots.

161. Tetradrachm, wt. 266 grs. B. C. 480-420. (Pl. XV: 5.) Obv. MEΞΞANA Biga of mules walking to right, driven by female charioteer (Messana); border of dots. Rev. MEΞΞANION Hare running to right; beneath, dolphin to right; border of dots. (From the Montagu sale, No. 113.)

162. Tetradrachm, wt. 263 grs. B. C. 480-420. (Pl. XV: 6.) Obv. Similar to last, but mules crowned by flying Nike; and in exergue, olive leaf with fruit.

163. Tetradrachm, wt. 262 grs. B. C. 420-396. (Pl. XV: 7.) Obv. Similar to last, but to left, and with Nike crowning charioteer; while in exergue, two dolphins. Rev. MEΞΞANION Similar to last reverse, but beneath, head of Pan, to right.

164. Tetradrachm, wt. 260 grs. B. C. 420-396. (Pl. XV: 8.) Obv. Similar to last. Rev. MEΞΞANION in exergue. Hare running to left; above, dove flying to left; beneath, stalk of barley.

(From the Wotoch sale, No. 234.)

We have already confessed to finding a certain amount of obscurity in the precise date and order of those calamitous events which produced a sudden cessation of the old Zanklaian coinage and the adoption of these issues so different in type and fabric; but there seems, as has also been shown in the historical sketch, good authority for attributing such a complete revolution to the doubly treacherous Anaxilas. As tyrant he would ordain for the conquered city this fresh coinage, on which were displayed both of his early Rhegine types: the biga of mules with which he had gained his Olympic victory, and the running hare.

That the mule should ever have been deemed worthy of participation in the great religious contests at Olympia seems to our modern ideas most

incongruous; and that the practice was indeed not wholly in harmony with Hellenic sentiment is shown by the fact that for barely more than half a century were such races included among the competitions. While the scornful refusal of Simonides to grant Anaxilas' request, that "the favored of the gods" should commemorate this victory with the customary ode, displays the poet's personal antipathy. And when at last his repugnance had been overcome by an unprecedented fee, it was as "the daughters of storm-footed horses" that the strains of his inspired lyre immortalized the lowly victors, doubtless more accustomed, then as now, to a less heroic if more forcible form of invocation.

Two reasons have been assigned for the presence of the reverse figure, and probably a combination of these influenced both Anaxilas' choice and the long continuance of the type. The hare, as the sacred emblem of the local god Pan, whose head with its goat's horn appears on No. 163, would naturally be chosen as the fitting symbol of the city's religious life; while on the other hand historians tell us that Anaxilas had from his Italian possessions introduced into the island this animal, so much esteemed as a delicacy by the ancients, and that he wished to record this praiseworthy action on his coinage. At any rate the figure appealed to the popular fancy, and the "Hares" of Messana, though far less numerous, were widely known in the same way as the "Owls" of Athens, or the "Colts" of Corinth.

My position regarding the designation of a coin's obverse and reverse having been so positively stated at the end of article XIII, it may seem that the choice of a simple biga for the obverse of this series of coins shows an inconsistency for which some explanation is due. But we must remember that the Olympic games were primarily a religious function and that a victory would impart even to the lowly *apênê* of mules such a sacred symbolism as to give its type the preference, even if the hare were surely to be considered an emblem of the great god Pan. And when in Nos. 5-8 of the plate a female charioteer appears, it is the nymph Messana, personification of the city, who guides the victorious mules, and by her divine or semi-divine presence gives still greater emphasis to the religious aspect of this type.

The dolphin on No. 161 recalls to our mind the earlier type of the city, with the same significance; while the clear logic of Mr. Arthur Evans in one of his Sicilian papers guides us amidst the uncertain mazes of vague hypothesis to a new yet natural conclusion regarding the figure of two dolphins plunging together, in the exergues Nos. 163 and 164. In their harmonious action he sees a reference to the alliance between Messana and Syracuse, and to the victory which thus combined they won over the Athenians in the sea-fight of 425. Upon certain coins of Syracuse also (Nos. 87 and 88) we found this device, which undoubtedly had there the same significance, although for want of space our text then contained no comment on either alliance or victory. The continuance of this figure on Messanian issues of a somewhat later period shows, not so much a lasting maritime connection as an unwillingness to alter recognized types.

This latter reverse (No. 164) is evidently modelled after the example examined by Mr. Evans in his paper (*Numismatic Chronicle*, 1896, Plate VIII: 9), and on which he finds a new signature ANAN, which he completes as Ananios. His coin shows these letters in front of the dove, while our example displays, immediately behind the bird, a minute yet clear architectural pattern hardly visible in the reproduction, but which a study of the original plainly shows to be a flowing conventionalized form of these same letters.

Thus for nearly a century we see such issues continuing with little alteration; and throughout these two periods, wherein artistic improvement and at least a striving after perfection are visible in all other coinages of importance, the Messanian types, always so ordinary from an artistic standpoint, remain clear evidence of the low state of culture in this flourishing city. It is hard to realize that the engravers of Nos. 163 and 164 were actual contemporaries of Euainetos, Kimon, and all that wonderful group of artists whose productions at Syracuse, Kamarina and Katane have rightly received our unstinted praise.

165. Drachm, wt. 59 grs. B. C. 420-396. (Plate XV: 9.) Obv. Head of Pelorias to left, wearing wreath of barley leaves, ear-ring and necklace; in front, ΠΕΛΩΡΙΑΞ; border of dots. Rev. Pheraimon, naked but wearing a crested helmet

and armed with spear and shield, advancing to right in fighting attitude; around, ΦΕΡΑΙΜΩΝ; on right, Ξ; border of dots.

A few miles north of the city a low point stretching out even further towards the neighboring mainland and forming the real corner of Sicily, bore in early days the name Peloris. Dotted with little salt lakes wherein fish and wild fowl abounded, this sandy cape was always a favorite and profitable haunt of the citizens, who built here a temple to Poseidon; but who evidently considered the spot as sacred above all to the local nymph Pelorias — for so the coins which rescue her from oblivion would have the name.

With like mystical intent, the reverse depicts one of Aiolos' six sons, the fabled hero who, with his brother Androkles, ruled over the whole north coast of Sicily. That Pheraimon was a notable warrior, conquering and holding firmly his domain by force and arms, in those rude days when might was right, is clearly shown by his threatening posture.

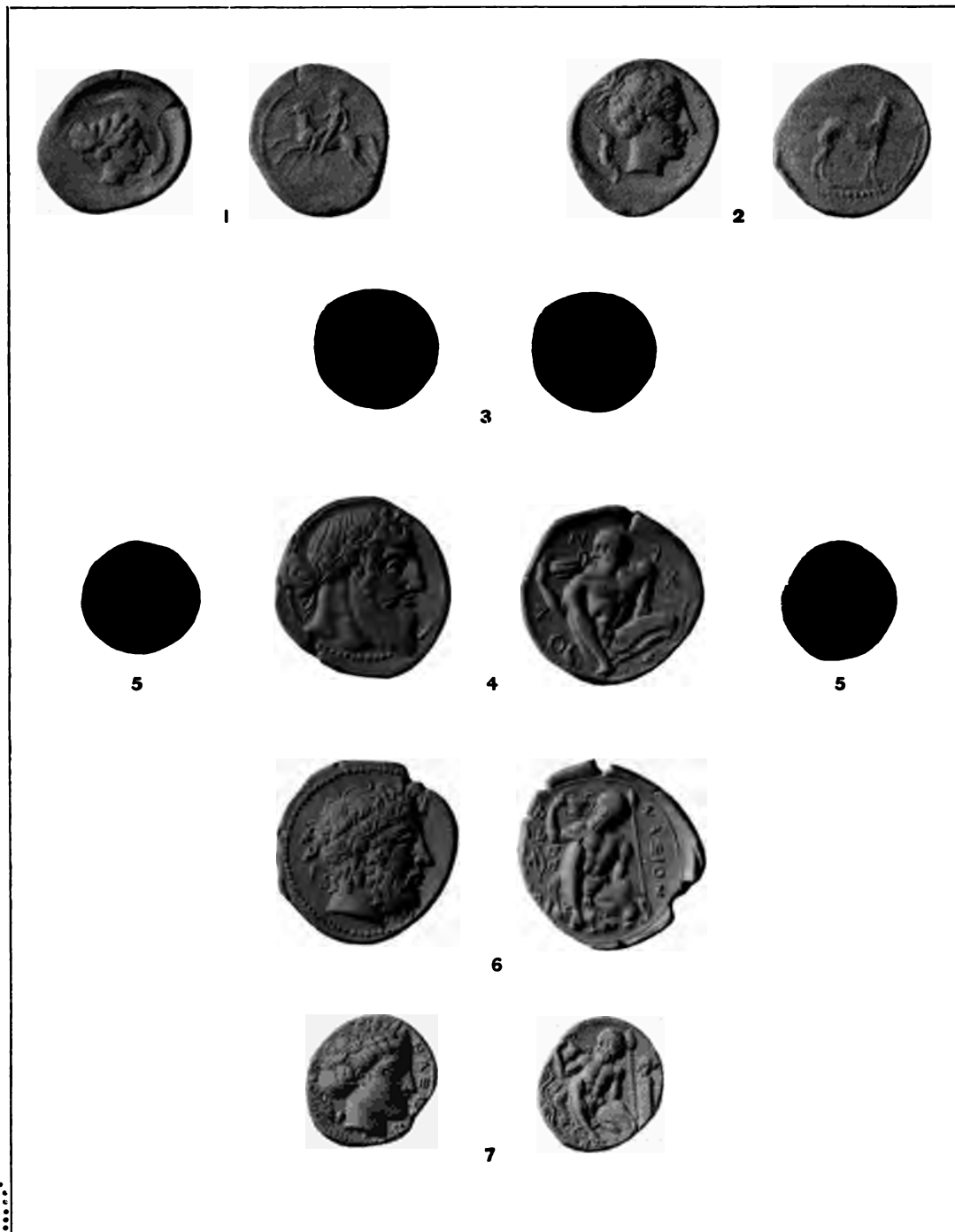
The wide artistic influence of Syracusan issues is evident from the similarity in treatment between this head and the Persephone type of Euainetos, whose wonderful dekadrachms were undoubtedly, from this time on, exciting the admiration of more and more distant portions of the Greek world.











ANCIENT GREEK SILVER COINS FROM THE BENSON COLLECTION.

# ANCIENT GREEK COINS

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XVI

SICILY, 6. (MOTYA, NAXOS)

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BY

FRANK SHERMAN BENSON

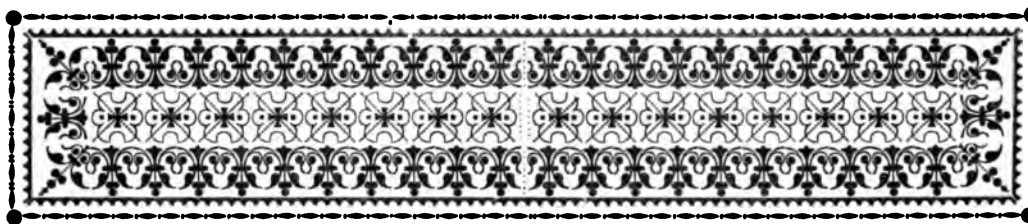


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## ANCIENT GREEK COINS.

XVI. SICILY, 6. (MOTYA, NAXOS.)



MOTYA now transports the scene of our investigations to a region little frequented by Greeks ; for this ancient Phoenician foundation,—at first a simple trading post, as its name, “the spinning factory,” implies,—was situated on the extreme western coast of Sicily, well within the recognized confines of Carthaginian dominion. A city so far removed from the multiform rivalries and activities of Greek life would find no place in the present inquiry, were it not for a few coins whose Greek or Punic inscriptions distinguish them as the rare products of the Motyan mint.

And indeed Motya, although an important naval station for the Carthaginian power, is hardly mentioned in Sicilian history until early in the fourth century, when it was attacked by Dionysios, who here terminated a brilliant march of conquest through the hitherto inviolable territory of his hereditary foe. The siege which followed, ranking as it does among the most stubbornly contested of the world’s history, gives to the island stronghold its principal interest.

And terrible indeed is this chronicle of furious assaults repulsed with fanatic bravery, and of endless hand-to-hand conflicts, pursued always to the

destruction of one or the other band of combatants. Even the final capture of the city's massive and desperately defended walls seemed no positive advantage gained, but rather only the prelude to a succession of disconnected, savage, mortal struggles, from battlemented house to house, from barricaded street to street, from hastily fortified square to square. Nor must we forget that Dionysios, besides urging on the fury of his attack with all the known appliances of ancient warfare, the heavy battering ram, the lofty movable wooden tower, the massive mole, here first made trial with terrible execution of his latest invention, the catapult, and from well-chosen sites hurled into the lofty city a continuous shower of death-dealing thunderbolts.

## MOTYA.

166. Didrachm, wt. 124 grs. B. C. 420-397. (Pl. XVI: 1.) Obv. Head of nymph to right; around, three dolphins. Rev. Nude youth riding sideways on horse galloping to left: border of dots.

(From the Bunbury sale, No. 358.)

167. Didrachm, wt. 126 grs. B. C. 420-397. (Pl. XVI: 2.) Obv. MOTYAION Head of nymph to right; behind, crayfish. Rev. Dog standing to right: border of dots.

(From the Bunbury sale, No. 358.)

In a small "barbarian" community such as this, one could hardly expect many evidences of a pure or well-developed Greek culture; so we are not surprised to discover that the types of Motya, far from presenting original compositions, are always copied with slight variation from one or another Sikeliot source.

Thus the obverse of the former coin is seen to be imitative of the Syracusan scheme already illustrated (Pl. VI: 8), while the reverse horseman finds his original in a type of less distant Himera. This group may either represent a youth boastfully parading his perfect balance by the easy attitude in which he sits his galloping bare-backed steed; or it may refer to a form of

contest at one time important enough to be included among the Olympic games, although, like the mule-car race, discontinued after flourishing for half a century. It was in this *καλπη* that the riders, at a certain spot in the course, had to leap from their horses at full speed, and running beside them, thus struggle to attain the goal.

The motif for both types of the second coin originated at Segesta, and since we intend in our next paper to consider at length the issues of this far more important city, no explanation of these Punic imitations need now be offered.



**N**AXOS, which gloried in the proud title of the most ancient Hellenic settlement in Sicily, owed its foundation to the chance that an adventurous sailor, one Theokles of Chalkis, helplessly driven before an easterly gale farther and farther amid the fabled terrors of unexplored seas, saw at last looming high before him a mountainous coast, in whose rugged extent his good fortune disclosed a safe and accessible harbor. This eastern shore of Sicily so favorably impressed the wanderer that, after regaining his native city, already famous for its colonial enterprise, he quickly organized an expedition, and in the year 735 returned to take formal possession. As oikist Theokles bestowed upon his new settlement a name which should do honor to certain of his companions who had sailed from the island of Naxos in the far Aegæan sea.

Increasing rapidly in wealth and power, this earliest of Sikeliot cities was able a few years later to found, near by, two colonies, Leontinoi and Katane, both, as we have seen, active and prominent factors in Sicilian history. The story of Naxos, resembling closely that of this second daughter city as already given, in part XIV, shows her first two centuries of peaceful independence closing with the tyranny of Hippokrates, — himself but a forerunner of Gelon and Hieron. It was this latter despot who, still as in the



case of Katane, proceeded to banish the entire population of Naxos, although without extinguishing her name and identity.

Then soon after his death, again came freedom, lasting for three-quarters of a century, during which period we read of a fierce but unsuccessful attack on Naxos by Syracuse and Messana, and next of the citizens' enthusiastic support of their chosen allies, the Athenians. But this useless and ill-advised defiance of their Doric neighbor received a cruel punishment, for no sooner had Dionysios consolidated his power in Syracuse than he proceeded to the capture — made easy, it is true, by treason — of Naxos, whose final terrible doom was now accomplished. Not content with selling all her people into slavery, the ruthless conqueror decreed a complete destruction of the city, and then with grim irony handed over the desolated ruins to his Sikel allies, as representing the original owners of the land.

Thus in 402 vanished another Hellenic city.

#### NAXOS.

168. Drachm, wt. 83 grs. Before 480 B. C. (Pl. XVI: 3.) Obv. Head of Dionysos to left, with pointed beard and long hair, wearing wreath of ivy; border of dots between two plain circles. Rev. NAXION Bunch of grapes on stalk with two leaves.

This favored district, renowned for its fertility in the growth of the grape, would naturally cherish with peculiar care the worship of Dionysos; so that we recognize without surprise the god of the vine in this archaic ivy-crowned head, and acknowledge as well the fitness of the reverse type, a bunch of grapes pendant from their leafy branch. It must, however, be confessed that this worship may have been introduced by the first colonists, among whom were, as has been said, numerous adventurers from the older Naxos, one of the many spots claiming the somewhat doubtful honor of being the birthplace of the festive god. And we shall find later, on the first coin types of the Aegaeon island, a kantharos, symbol of the same Dionysiac cult; while

the latest issues supplement this convivial design with a head of the wine-god himself.

The typically archaic character of our coin establishes as its early date in all probability the latter half of the sixth century; a determination strengthened by the Aiginetic weight-standard, which, as a colony of Chalkis, Naxos followed in these first issues.

169. Tetradrachm, wt. 264 grs. B. C. 461-415. (Pl. XVI: 4.) Obv. Head of bearded Dionysos to right, wearing wreath of ivy, and hair tied in knot behind: border of dots. Rev. NAXION Nude bearded Seilenos seated facing and to left, holding kantharos in right hand.

(From the Trist sale, No. 49.)

170. Drachm, wt. 66 grs. B. C. 461-415. (Pl. XVI: 5.) Obv. Similar to last. Rev. NAXION Similar to last.

(From the Hoffman sale.)

This tetradrachm is an exceptional coin; considered indeed by Mr. Percy Gardner "one of the most remarkable in existence." For, examining first the obverse, we find in the head of Dionysos a series of striking contradictions. A casual glance at the stiff formal treatment of eye, moustache and beard, would justify the belief that without doubt such a painstaking artist was just emerging from the archaic environment. But more detailed study shows an easy grace in the finish of hair and ivy-wreath, together with an assured boldness of attack in the difficult projection of beard and hair-knot beyond the dotted border, which are undoubted evidences that this engraver's experience and technique would not be out of place in the later years of the transitional period.

The same inconsistencies are found in the reverse. The figure, depicting aged Seilenos as the shameless embodiment of unrestrained bestial indulgence, is modelled with a strict fidelity to nature, a studied if exaggerated treatment of the muscles, and a masterly foreshortening of his difficult posture, which would all presuppose an advanced artistic period. While on the

other hand we are confronted by the most patent archaisms; such as the representation of the body facing while the head is in profile, and the fact that the inscription still clings to the early  $\chi$  instead of the later  $\Xi$ .

My own thoughtful judgment must style the coin archaistic, and as to date would place the designer towards the end of his possible orbit. Thus I prefer to consider the archaisms he has displayed, as simulated, and the result either of policy or affectation. Neither quality is unexampled in the artistic temperament, even of the present day; and designed stiffness seems far more probable than precocious excellence.

Mr. Gardner states the unusual and interesting fact that all the known examples of this Seilenos are products of a single die; which makes our uncertainty only the more trying.

171. Tetradrachm, wt. 263 grs. B. C. 415-403. (Pl. XVI: 6.) Obv. Head of bearded Dionysos to right, wearing stephane decorated with ivy-wreath: border of dots. Rev.  $\text{NA}\Xi\text{ION}$  Nude bearded Seilenos seated facing and to left, holding kantharos in right hand and thyrsos in left; on left, ivy growing: plain border.

(From the Montagu sale, No. 119.)

Still the same characteristic types, but now softened and elaborated by the skillful hand of a later and more accomplished technician, who has made his work the masterpiece of Naxian issues. The head, a composition of genuine distinction, is however not wholly pleasing, with its somewhat sensual features, refined to the verge of effeminacy, and its luxuriant curling locks, which show the profuse use of those unguents so dear to southern races. A charming touch is however displayed in the delicately twisting vine branch which transforms the rather severe stephane into a graceful adornment.

The reverse is even more highly finished, although of course merely a development of the older scheme. Indeed the constant adherence of Naxian engravers to this figure, in spite of a pose technically so difficult, gives plausibility to the suggestion that perhaps somewhere in the city there stood a popular and venerated statue of similar design. Here is visible the same

